

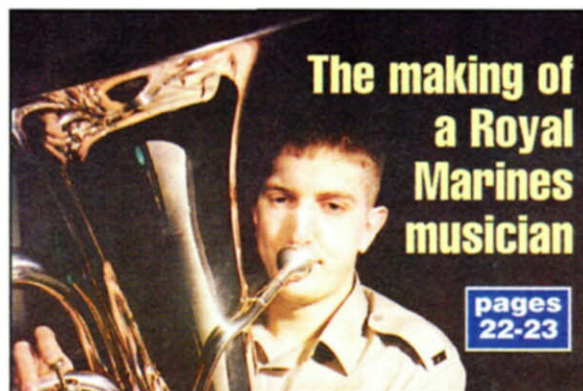


Navy News

PLAIN ENGLISH CAMPAIGN AWARD WINNER

MAY 1999

80p



The making of a Royal Marines musician

pages 22-23

People in the front line

pages 8-10



Strike puts Splendid in RN annals

HMS Splendid has made her mark on Royal Naval history once again by becoming the first British vessel to make a strike with Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The nuclear submarine (pictured) – which just a few months ago carried out Britain's first practice, live firing of Tomahawk – joined NATO's bombardment of Milosevic at the outset of the campaign.

As Navy News went to press, the boat was remaining on station, replenished with more cruise missiles at, says the Ministry of Defence, "a NATO base". As is usual with submarine operations, there is very little information about Splendid's activities that MOD is willing to confirm, including the number of missiles fired and press reports that she re-armed in Sicily.

■ Award for Tomahawk team – page 17.



Our reporter is on board Invincible as . . .

SEA HARRIERS JOIN IN BATTLE FOR KOSOVO



● Armed with AMRAAM missiles, Sea Harrier FA2s launch from HMS Invincible for their first combat mission in the Balkans conflict.

SEA HARRIERS from HMS Invincible launched one of their most hazardous missions since the Falklands War as they took off on their first sorties over the Balkans, writes **Dominic Blake**.

Armed with deadly AMRAAM and Sidewinder missiles, pilots from 800 Squadron have been patrolling the skies in search of Yugoslavia's Russian-built MiG fighters and low-level aircraft attacking Kosovo.

After the first four FA2 Sea Harriers touched down safely on the carrier, which is off the coast of Albania, one of the pilots told me: "Our main mission is to go out there and look for aircraft getting airborne. We are watching our radars all the time looking for MiG 29s and 21s.

"But the surface-to-air threat is the big one – much more than in the Gulf where Iraq's air defences have been degraded.

"Yugoslavia's air defences seem to be not too degraded yet, despite all the bombing that's been going on, and that's probably because they have been picking up tactics from Saddam Hussein.

"Reports have suggested that

they are talking to each other and you can see that from their tactics."

While air attacks by NATO have destroyed individual missile launchers and the communication system which connects them, dozens remain concealed and many more portable weapons pose

■ Turn to page 18.

Warships in the front line – pages 17-19 & 35.

HMS Belfast to head for Portsmouth

THE WARTIME cruiser HMS Belfast is to leave her berth as a museum ship in the Pool of London for dockyard maintenance at Portsmouth.

She will be towed to dry dock in the Naval base, arriving coincidentally on June 6, the 55th anniversary of the D-Day landings in which she took part as a bombardment ship.

■ Full story in page 37.

Canada chooses port names for Upholders

CANADA is to re-name Britain's former Upholder-class submarines after four of their country's major ports.

The former HM submarines Unseen, Unicorn, Ursula and Upholder will be re-named respectively as Victoria (the capital of British Columbia), Windsor (on the Ontario shore of the Great Lakes), Corner Brook in Newfoundland and Chicoutimi on the St Lawrence waterway.

Previous ships of the name this century are few, and include in World War II a Canadian Flower-class corvette (HMCS Chicoutimi) and a British V & W destroyer (HMS Windsor).

Effectively, the boats will give Canada a new submarine flotilla as only one of their three operational O-class boats - HMCS Onondaga - is completely fit for service. The first of the ex-Upholders is expected to enter service in spring next year, while their

Canadian crews are being trained at HMS Collingwood, HMS Sultan and on simulators at the former HMS Dolphin, Gosport.

First of the crews were due to begin training on an Upholder submarine at Barrow-in-Furness this month.

All four boats are being refitted at Barrow by VSEL for the Canadian Navy under the terms of a £266-million lease-to-buy arrangement with the Ministry of Defence.

● HMS Unicorn - now to be HMCS Windsor



Pier saved by Navy divers in 'hazardous' mine operation

A GERMAN magnetic mine whose discovery forced the closure of Southend Pier was detonated harmlessly by Royal Navy divers in what was described as a difficult and hazardous operation.

Early VC set to make £35,000

THE VICTORIA Cross presented to a sailor at the first investiture of the medal in 1857 was expected to fetch up to £35,000 when sold at Spink's on April 27.

The VC was presented to Royal Navy seaman Henry Curtis (pictured wearing his medal) for his part in the rescue of a wounded soldier during the assault on the Redan fortress at Sebastopol in the Crimean War in 1855. Curtis, who was serving with the Naval Brigade, survived to become boatswain's mate in the battleship Marlborough, the Mediterranean Fleet flagship. He left the Navy in 1864 and died in Portsmouth in 1896 at the age of 74.

Curtis has no marked grave, but a memorial to him has been erected in recent years thanks to the Victoria Cross Memorial Fund.



The 750lb GD ground influence mine had been trawled up by a fishing vessel which lowered it again in about six metres of water and 300yds off the famous pier.

The 5ft long mine had been dropped by aircraft and still had its parachute attached.

The bomb disposal team from Southern Diving Unit 2 based at Portsmouth realised that if the mine detonated at low tide, when it was covered by just 4ft of water, it would break all the pier windows and put anyone on the pier at risk.

Acting on their advice the police evacuated the pier and immediate seafront for 24 hours on April 8-9 while the Navy divers began a two-day operation to deal with the mine.

CPO Cliff Richardson, who was on the scene, said LS(D) Andy Kirby dived on the mine. "He was operating in nil visibility and a strong tide - and found that the mine was snarled up in the trawler's nets. He did very well to free it, working in difficult and hazardous conditions."

The team then had to wait until the afternoon of the following day until the right tide conditions assisted them to lift the mine and, with their Gemini inflatable boat, move it two miles away from the pier. Its successful, controlled explosion raised a 50ft column of water.

The Portsmouth team, led by PO(D) John Meekin, also included PO(D) Dave Moore and AB(D) Jan Mobley.

MAN-ABOUT-TOWN LOOK GETS TRIAL IN US



IF TRIALS are successful, this is the new urban camouflage kit destined to garb the Royal Marines. This member of Comacchio Company - who is, it has to be said, in noticeably non-urban surroundings - was among those trying out the new uniform while on Exercise Urban Warrior with US and Dutch marines in Oakland, California. As well as the clothing, new technology was also being tested during the exercise.

Picture: CPO(PHOT) Wayne Humphreys

Brave's last act is made in style

RETIRING frigate HMS Brave has returned to Devonport for what is probably the last time.

The Type 22 vessel entered Plymouth Sound on March 22. She became non-operational on April 1 to enter a state of extended readiness before decommissioning at the end of next year.

During a six-week deployment to the Mediterranean she conducted her last replenishment at sea in style - with the giant American aircraft carrier USS Enterprise joining in.

The event came after a ten-day exercise with the US Navy - led by the Enterprise Battle Group. The frigate refuelled on the starboard side of the support vessel USS Monogahela, while the carrier took on fuel on the port side.

The operation was watched by one of Brave's former commanding officers, Vice Admiral Fabian Malbon, now Deputy Commander Fleet, who was embarked in Enterprise.

Under her current Commanding Officer, Cdr Gary Pettitt, Brave completed a six-week deployment to the Med which included visits to Turkey, Malta, Spain and Portugal. On her return to Britain she visited Faslane and Liverpool.

Agency takes over housing

SERVICE housing has now come under the administration of a Ministry of Defence agency.

The Defence Housing Executive, formed four years ago, has been formed into an agency tasked with providing and maintaining good quality housing for Service personnel and families, and with continuing to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

£5,000 for Anson bell

A BELL from a Royal Navy ship of the line that fought in the Napoleonic Wars is expected to fetch up to £5,000 when it is sold this month at Christie's.

The bell from the Anson, built as a 64-gun vessel, was recovered after she was wrecked following her participation in the capture from the French of the West Indies island of Curacao in 1807.

Her most famous battle 25 years before took place in the same region when Admiral Sir George Rodney's fleet overcame a French force at The Saintes - an encounter during the American War of Independence that settled once and for all the naval dominance of the West Indies.

The maritime sale on May 13 will also include the bell from the Second World War battleship HMS Rodney - expected to go for up to £1,800; the dress sword of Capt (later Vice Admiral) Sir Thomas Hardy, the Commanding Officer of the Victory at Trafalgar - expected to make up to £900; and an eye-witness's letter describing the preliminaries of the battle. That is estimated to sell for £1,200.

Trident docs join ambulance missions



● Trident submarine doctors responding from the HEART. They are (l-r) Surgeon Lts Paul Rees, Damian Kershaw and Sam Hutchings. Their colleague, Surgeon Lt Steve Bland's submarine was on patrol when the picture was taken by LA(PHOT) Rob Harding.

FOUR Trident submarine doctors at Clyde Naval Base are giving up spare time to run an accident response team in support of the Scottish ambulance service.

Calling themselves HEART (Helensburgh Emergency Accident Response Team), they have attended over 25 emergencies since they started the work in November.

They are fully trained in emergency medicine, incident management, ambulance service procedures and emergency driving. And when possible, they give up time to be on call with Paisley ambulance control.

HEART co-ordinator, Surgeon Lt Paul Rees, said: "The ambulance service has the training, experience and expertise to deal with emergencies in the community, but on occasions the added input of a doctor can be invaluable."

The team receives no payment, and its members either buy their own equipment or have it funded by local charities.

Because one of the four doctors is on patrol in a Trident submarine at any one time, Paul is hoping to increase the numbers on the HEART team to provide a more established service.

TEACHER TRAINING

TEACHER Samantha Clarke left the classroom behind for a weekend in the RN's new patrol vessel HMS Tracker.

She was one of a party of nine from NW London's landlocked RNR unit HMS Northwood who were invited to carry out a series of exercises in the Solent.

On their way back they made the customary salute to Nelson's flagship HMS Victory. "It may sound corny, but this simple ceremony brought home to me the pride I have in being part of this great and historic Naval tradition," said Samantha.

Their CO Cdr Terry Craig added: "These training opportunities at sea are of immense value to us. Until recently our primary role has been to support the Northwood Headquarters in shore operations, but we are now seeing much greater integration with the RN both at sea and ashore."

"There are many opportunities for Reservists to serve at sea in Naval operations all over the world, but for those who prefer to support the Navy ashore there are still many exciting roles to fill in the Operations, Logistics and Medical branches."

See interview with the Honorary Commodore RNR, page 29.

● Samantha Clarke at the helm of HMS Tracker with Lisa Humphrey (Hertfordshire University) giving the orders and Mark Thomas on lookout watch.



Shooting stars

HMS MONTROSE has also joined the cast of Navy in Action, the £2m Bond-style movie featured last month.

The Type 23 frigate was filmed off the Bahamian Island of Eluethera – though the setting is the Indian Ocean where a terrorist warload launches a pirate raid.

His ultimate aim is the capture of £50 million in gold carried by a British merchant vessel. Montrose's fictional counterpart HMS Monarch (CO played by Jo Dow of TV's *The Bill*) receives a mayday call and despatches her Lynx helicopter (actually HMS Marlborough's, here piloted by actress Jill Halfpenny) and Royal Marines detachment to investigate.

As the scenario develops, Montrose's 4.5 inch gun is brought to bear on the terrorists' patrol craft and shore base. During scenes to counter an incoming missile the ship's gunnery teams were used extensively in close-range battery engagements (see above).

Special effects were provided by Peter Hutchinson – whose team has lately been working on the new *Star Wars* film. On board Montrose he fired off three dummy Harpoon missiles from a purpose-built launcher that provided remarkably realistic footage.

Damage to the ship was simulated following collision with a mine and shrapnel from the terrorist missile, allowing members of the ship's company to show off their fire fighting skills. Below water damage was to be filmed at the RN's Damage Repair Instruction Unit in Portsmouth.

Said producer Simon Mills: "Given the unavoidable constraints of filming onboard an operational warship, the commanding officer and his crew could not have been more helpful or accommodating, turning what might have been a chore into a pleasure."

Prospects brighten for command at sea

A NEW SYSTEM for selecting commander-rank officers for sea appointments is intended to make the process fairer, simpler and more efficient.

The reduction in sea appointments available to Warfare Branch commanders has meant that now only 40 per cent can expect to command at sea compared with 60 per cent seven years ago.

The current system allows for late selections from a pool of commanders not chosen by the Sea Appointments Selection Board on promotion. However, it is felt that selection ought to be made early enough so that officers have retained sufficient currency to be effective at sea.

Also, pool candidates tend to expect selection right up to their fourth attempt, whereas those who are not chosen by the third or fourth shot are very rarely selected.

The system is described by appointers as "over-complicated and poorly understood by many Warfare officers." A clear and formal indication of where commanders stood over sea service selection would be more honest and would allow them to make better career decisions.

The new system, which begins with the promotion round in June, means that all officers will be assessed for sea appointment on promotion to commander. Those who meet specific criteria will be selected for an immediate sea appointment.

Others will not and will be given shore jobs, while the remainder – 'review candidates' – will fill a first appointment ashore and then will be assessed for selection three years after their promotion and, if necessary, a second time a year later.

That system will bring sea appointment selection of commanders into line with that for captains. Details are published in Royal Navy Defence Council Instruction 52/99.

Evasion force

THE TV Licensing Authority has warned viewers living in Service establishments that they will be prosecuted if they watch television without a valid licence.

Mick Hill, the Authority's Director said: "Our research has forced us to conclude that military bases have a high level of evasion and we are determined to root out these evaders."

New deal aims to fight fire with fire

BRITAIN's most advanced fire fighting training units (FFTU) are to be established for the Royal Navy at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Faslane.

A deal signed last month between the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency (NRTA) and Flagship Training Ltd was welcomed by Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson as "extremely good news for the Naval Service".

"The project will ensure that the RN is provided with the very best training available, using the most up-to-date and environmentally friendly fire fighting training facilities."

The units will be designed to create realistic fire fighting scenarios, using environmentally safe propane-fuelled fires and artificial training smoke to achieve a realistic shipborne scenario.

Flagship Training Ltd will design, build, operate and maintain two new facilities at HMS Excellent, Portsmouth and HMS Raleigh, Torpoint. Meanwhile existing Local Authority fire units in Strathclyde will be modified for Naval use.

Chief Executive of the NRTA Rear Admiral John Chadwick commented: "This is a landmark for the Royal Navy and Flagship Training Ltd, as it represents the first Private Finance Initiative contract signed under our Partnering Agreement in 1996."

"There is always the need for our people to be trained to cope effectively with the hazards of fire and smoke at sea, to enable them to prevent loss of life, to avoid injury and to minimise damage, thereby enabling the ship to retain its operational capability."

"These 'state-of-the-art' facilities will ensure that the Royal Navy continues to provide the best naval training possible, using the most up-to-date equipment and the latest training techniques, at an affordable price."

JACK ET JACQUES

La Langue Universelle

(Dans un singles bar à San Diego, le premier port de l'USN en sunny California)

'Quelle jolie paire de jeunes filles, Jack! Je suis fixed up pour la nuit avec la blonde, je crois!'

'Yeah, lucky old vous, Jacques. J'ai blown it avec la brunette.'

'Naturellement! Je ne suis pas surpris, avec votre crummy chat-up line!'

'Mon chat-up line? Do moi un faveur, Jacques! J'ai eu un grand succès avec la crumpet from Reyjavic à Rio avec mon chat-up line!'

'Incroyable! Vous must be joking!'

'Et pourquoi?'

'Well, par exemple – qu'est-ce que vous avez dit à la belle Francine? "Vous got skin comme le lee side d'un tombola tick-et!" Et puis: "Vos yeux, they shine comme la derrière de mes seconde-best Nombre Huits!"'

'Yeah, well ... What about vous, then, Jacques? "Je t'aime", vous avez dit – pas more – et Louella était all over vous! C'était degoutant.'

'Ah – c'est l'accent, Jack! Toutes les jeunes filles aiment l'accent Français! Je peux dire: "Vous avez un visage that could sink un mille bateaux, Louella" – et elle sera horizontale en deux minutes, yelling "Donnez moi le Tour de France, Jacques!"'

'OK, OK! C'est ma turn maintenant. Regardez – elles revient from les heads ... Francine! Je t'adore, Francine!'

'Oui! Moi aussi, Louella!'

'Prenez un poudre, Jack et Jacques! Louella et moi, nous avons trouvé une paire de doughboys avec loads de green-backs! Bonne nuit, suckers – et merci beaucoup pour les drinks!'



Illustrations par TWA.



Survey ship wins praise for science project aid among Indian Ocean islands

Beagle brings helping hands to a paradise under threat

SURVEY Squadron ship HMS Beagle has won the praise of marine scientists for her help in a research programme studying an island paradise that could be under threat.

On her first major deployment overseas for 11 years, Beagle provided vital help to a British project team conducting environmental research, training and education in the Indian Ocean islands of the Seychelles and Mauritius.

So important was Beagle's contribution that the researchers and islands' government expressed its thanks to the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, for the Navy's "exceptional assistance".

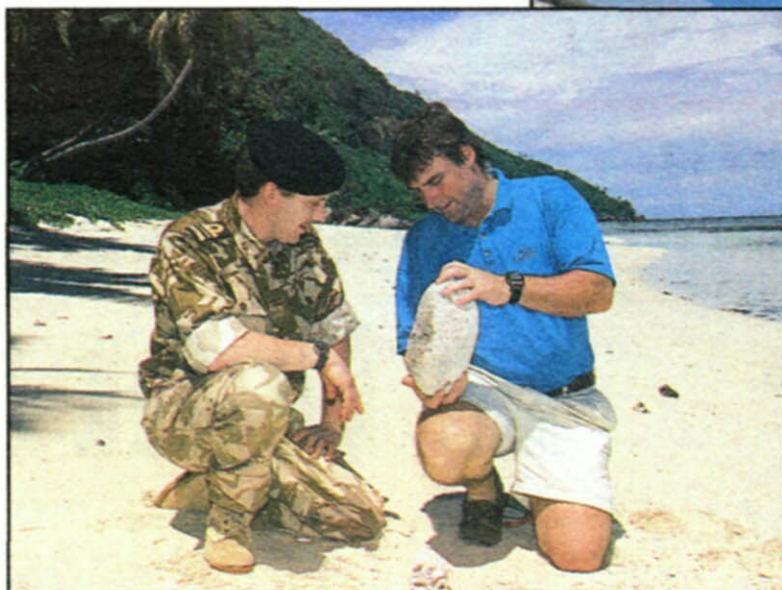
In an area suffering from the global warming problem of dying coral, the Beagle was committed to the support of Britain's Shoals of Capricorn Programme which is investigating the region's Mascarene Plateau, an underwater feature larger than the Great Barrier Reef and dominating the southwest Indian Ocean and its eco-system.

The programme is being run by the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Society in association with the Government of the Seychelles and Mauritius. As well as research, its aims include the development in the region of knowledge and skills for marine resource management and conservation.

Beagle used her rapid environmental assessment techniques to collect temperature, salinity and depth data.

The ship also landed a multi-skilled team of seven Navy personnel, led by CCMEA Paul Biggs, to provide engineering and technical support to the Shoals team.

Director of the programme, Iain



Watt, said: "The shore party from HMS Beagle were of great assistance in completing our base on St Anne island and providing basic training in outboard engine maintenance, during which they managed to repair four out of seven engines that were apparently irreparable."

The Shoals project is raising awareness of marine environmental issues in the western Indian Ocean and globally. Among concerns for the future is the bleaching and death of shallow-water coral due to a rise in sea temperature since 1997.

The Shoals team are investigating the recovery rate of shallow-water reefs, 90 per cent of which have died in some parts of the world, exposing lagoons to severe erosion. In the Seychelles that would have a devastating effect on fishing, tourism and bio-diversity.



THE PICTURES

- **TOP:** LS(SR) Jack Russell, uses a model designed and built by Beagle's shore team to teach 'rules of the road' to members of the Seychelles Fishing Authority.
- **ABOVE LEFT:** Coral killed by global warming is shown to the Commanding Officer of Beagle, Lt Cdr Jamie McMichael-Phillips by Iain Watt, Director of the Shoals of Capricorn Project.
- **ABOVE RIGHT:** HMS Beagle on her first major foreign deployment for nearly 11 years.
- **LEFT:** Members of the Beagle's shore team and the Seychelles Coastguard help construct a new building for the Shoals of Capricorn Project's global positioning system. Cameraman: LA(PHOT) Andy White.

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Sun rises on Pembroke's new friendship



FOR what is believed to be the first time, a ship of the name HMS Pembroke has visited her namesake town in West Wales. Newest of the Sandown-class minehunters, HMS Pembroke was pictured by PO(PHOT) Jan Brayley proceeding in the light of the rising sun in Milford Haven waterway. During her four-day visit, the ship forged new friendships and links with the local community.

Turn to page 32 for this month's Drafty feature.



Facts and figures

Class: Helicopter Assault Ship
Pennant number: L12
Builder: Kvaerner Govan (Clyde) and VSEL (Barrow)
Launched: October 11, 1995
Commissioned: September 30, 1998
Displacement: 21,578 tonnes
Length: 208 metres
Beam: 34.4 metres
Draught: 6.6 metres
Speed: 18 knots
Complement: 284 ship's company, up to 180 Air Group, and space for more than 800 Royal Marines
Machinery: Two Crossley-Pielstick diesel engines
Aircraft: 12 Sea Kings and six Lynx AH7 or six Gazelle helicopters or 12 Sea Harriers (ferry role)
Armament: Three Vulcan Phalanx close-in weapon systems and twin-barrel 30mm machine guns
Affiliations: City of Sunderland; Coldstream Guards; 30 Squadron RAF; The Worshipful Company of Farriers; Pangbourne College; Brymon Airways; Old Ocean Association



● Battleship HMS Ocean.

● First of a new generation – HMS Ocean with helicopters embarked.

Ocean to star at Navy Days

HMS OCEAN is billed as the star attraction at this year's Plymouth Navy Days.

The assault ship will make her Navy Days debut on August 28-30, when she will be open to the public, allowing tours below decks.

Her configuration also means that, for the first time, a Royal Navy ship can provide full access for disabled people.

Exhibits and demonstrations on board will show how Ocean works in close co-operation with the Royal Marines, and various bands will perform on her flight deck.

It is planned to have aircraft on static display, and the ship will host a special Navy Days church service on the Sunday morning.

But Ocean will not be the only ship attracting attention.

Organisers hope the event will feature more than 20 Royal Navy vessels, including a submarine, a mine countermeasures vessel, a hydrographic survey ship, Type 22 and Type 23 frigates.

Also present will be ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the sail training ship Lord Nelson of the Jubilee Sailing Trust for the Disabled and other vessels. Many will be open to the public.

Ocean has been engaged in extensive trials which culminate in a planned programme of operational sea training as Navy News goes to press.

It is hoped that she will become part of the front-line Fleet by the summer.

Officially a Landing Platform Helicopter, or LPH, she was originally designed as a replacement for HMS Hermes.

Based on the Invincible-class hull, she is lean-manned, with a ship's company of less than 300.

For more information or to order tattoo tickets (evenings from August 27-29) or 25 per cent discounted Navy Days tickets, contact Plymouth Tourist Information on 01752 266031, or visit the Plymouth Navy Days 1999 website at www.navydays.com

but with an Air Group and embarked Royal Marines, she can operate with more than 1,250 people on board.

Next month Ocean is due to deploy with 40 Commando and aircraft from 845 and 847 Squadrons as part of an amphibious task group.

The ships will head across the Atlantic to Canada and the United States to train with NATO allies, including a relatively straightforward exercise with the Canadians off Newfoundland and then on to the extensive US Marine Corps amphibious training areas in

Virginia and North Carolina.

Port visits are scheduled for Halifax, Norfolk and Wilmington – and it is hoped they will go some way to matching the tremendous reception the ship got when she visited her affiliated city of Sunderland in January.

Ocean faced her first major operation last year.

Hot-weather trials were interrupted when Hurricane Mitch struck Central America, and the ship was quickly on the scene to provide humanitarian assistance in the days immediately following the disaster.

Designed with troops in mind

Unlike previous LPHs, which were converted aircraft carriers, HMS Ocean was built with Royal Marines commandos in mind.

For example, all assault routes through the ship are double width to allow fully-kitted Royals to move with ease.

Her primary role is to carry an embarked Commando, 12 medium support helicopters and six Lynx or Gazelle attack helicopters.

The commando force and its equipment would be landed as part of an amphibious assault, principally by air.

However, water-borne landings are also possible, using the ship's four Vosper Thornycroft-built landing craft.

Vehicles and stores are loaded through a starboard quarter ramp, like a car ferry, and Ocean's vehicle deck can take six 105mm howitzer light guns and up to 40 assorted military transport vehicles.

A ramp from the vehicle deck to the flight deck allows equipment to be flown ashore by helicopter.

But when the ship is at anchor vehicles can also be unloaded through the ship's stern ramp on to Mexiflotes, then transferred ashore.

Ocean is powered by two Crossley-Pielstick diesel engines, which produce 17,700 hp and give her a speed in the order of 18 knots.

She was built in two stages. Kvaerner Govan on the River Clyde were contracted to construct the ship herself, and she was launched on October 11, 1995.

She then sailed under her own power to Barrow-in-Furness, where prime contractor Vickers fitted her out.

As the first of a new generation of amphibious ships, which will eventually include HM ships Albion and Bulwark, her home port is Devonport.

BATTLE HONOURS

Ushant1778
 Ushant1781
 Suez Canal ...1915
 Dardanelles ..1915
 Korea1952-53

Wooden walls to jet plane flights

THE PRESENT HMS Ocean is the sixth ship to bear the name, and has some illustrious predecessors.

The first was a 90-gun second-rate which won Battle Honours at the two encounters with French ships off Ushant.

The second also started life as a second-rate, in 1795, but was reclassified as a 110-gun first-rate in 1817. She spent most of her service in the Mediterranean.

The third began as a 91-gun wooden ship, but was changed to a 50-gun ironclad in 1861.

En route to the Far East she took the record for the longest day's run by a British ironclad under sail of 243 miles.

Ocean number four was a Canopus-class, 12,950-ton battleship launched in 1898.

Problems during build led to her being regarded as an

unlucky ship, and although she won honours at the Suez Canal and the Dardanelles in 1915, she was hit by a mine and shell, and all hands abandoned ship hours before she sank.

The fifth Ocean was a light fleet carrier, commissioned in June 1945. She took part in the experimental landings of the first true jet on board a ship under way – a Vampire – and of flying in complete darkness.

In 1946 she was involved in the rescue following the mining of HM ships Saumarez and Volage in the Corfu Incident.

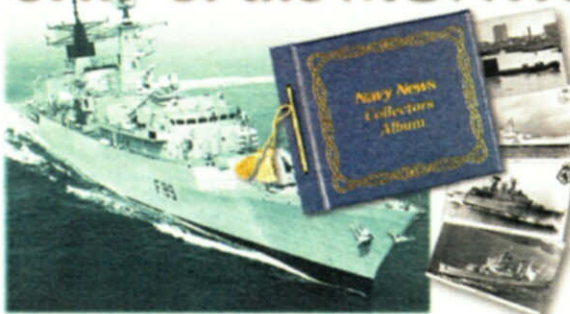
She was involved in the Korean War (her air group flew a record of 123 sorties in one day) and later came out of the Home Fleet Training Squadron to take an active role during the Suez Crisis.

She sailed for scrap in 1962.



● HMS Ocean at speed in the Yellow Sea during the Korean War.

SHIP of the MONTH



For only £10.50 (£12.50 surface mail outside the UK) you can buy a twelve month subscription to **Navy News** 'Ship of the Month'. This will deliver to your door a black and white postcard-sized photograph every month. The featured Ship for May is HMS Ocean, the Navy's new Helicopter Carrier.

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JACK

BY TUES



Language barrier

WELCOME to M. B. Kelly and Capt C. M. Robinson, kindred spirits in trying to keep accurate Jackspeak alive (March issue). I too jump up and down every time I see references to someone serving on a ship. Civilians don't live on houses; sailors too, live in ships.

In the splendid exhibition hall alongside HMV Britannia in Leith Docks I bought an official postcard with a caption saying that she is "tied up".

Back in 1940 I was told in no uncertain fashion that grocers tied up parcels; HM ships secured, moored or made fast.

The Times has just produced a Guide to English Style and Usage. In a section on the Royal Navy it advises its journalists and sub editors thus: "moored or made fast". It also recommends 'pennant' (not 'pendant') - although that's not what it says in my Manual of Seamanship Vol 1, 1937.

English is a wonderful language to which the sea has made a vital contribution in terms now in common usage. Let's keep it like that. - M. K. Tither, Chesterfield.

Sally Army saluted

THE EXPERIENCE of CCCT S. R. McLeod when wearing uniform in Ruislip (March issue) reminds me of an occasion when I wore the uniform of CPOMA to attend Remembrance Day Service at Worcester Cathedral.

An elderly lady approached me for assistance. She had a small wooden cross bearing a poppy which she wanted me to plant in the Garden of Remembrance.

I was happy to oblige, but could not help wondering what service connection had motivated her request.

With due solemnity I planted the cross, came to attention and saluted.

She seemed suitably impressed as she proudly informed me: "Both my father and my elder brother were in the Salvation Army." - J. G. Hinton, Worcester.

Bribes slur 'outrageous' Oh, really?

I HAVE just read Commodore Crichtley's farewell offering as Drafty (March issue), in which he says that when he joined submarines in 1968 bribery was current.

I held the post of Drafting Coxswain in 1945-47, taking over three days after VE Day. During my time and for at least ten years before and two years after I know of no such bribery.

I do not know what happened later as I had left the Royal Navy but I see no reason to believe these high standards fell.

For a senior Naval officer to repeat these rumours as statements of fact is outrageous. This seems to follow the modern practice of denigrating those that have served before. How dare you, Commodore? - T. M. Moore, Newton Abbot.

RE DRAFTY's article on 'Blue Liners' being used for bribes, I can confirm from personal experience that draft chits could be bought - but not cheaply.

In 1940, as an ex-Ganges boy turned 18, I entered the big barracks eager for my first draft. Having quite a large sum of accumulated pay I could afford the luxury of dining in the Naafi, where one morning I sat at a table alongside an old three-badger nursing a cup of tea.

When I confided my longing for sea time Stripey commented "You sprogs are all the same, desperate

to learn the hard way." He then offered to show me the road to a draft chit if I subbed him breakfast.

Though suspicious of a con trick, I agreed. True to his word, he took me to a CPO who, without preamble, said "It will cost you three quid" - a week's wages in those days for most working men - and next day I had my coveted draft chit.

The drafting office, situated in the basement of one of the blocks, was fronted by half a dozen windows - barred, if memory serves me correctly. At these windows sat CPOs and POs, each a member of a close-knit fraternity of 'natives' - local men with homes and families in the town, as were the majority of the barracks staff.

Behind them were rows of filing cabinets containing cards - the rear cards believed by matelots, probably correctly, to be those of fraternity brothers which never saw daylight.

There were quite a few rackets in barracks at that time, including the chief who made sure that all non-smoking matelots drew their tobacco issue and sold it on to him. Then there was the PO supervising draft routine kit inspections who could always immediately replace a missing item at a price; and the civilian barber who did a roaring trade in totally unnecessary haircuts. - T. Lyness, Bellshill.

It does not purport to give an overall view of the D-Day campaign. This was done in that other outstanding film *The Longest Day* in which our contribution was fully acknowledged.

The Dam Busters is one of the finest war films ever made, but nobody on this side of the Atlantic would criticise it for failing as it did to acknowledge that the war in the air during World War II was not fought by the RAF alone.

And isn't that other classic *The Cruel Sea* somewhat parochial, too? Did the RCN and the USN play no part in the Battle of the Atlantic?

Why not just accept *Private Ryan* for what it sets out to be? - D. J. Beynon, Haslingfield, Cambs.

Letters to the Editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

Criticising Pte Ryan

COULD somebody please explain, objectively and not through eyes blinkered by the red, white and blue, just why the Academy Award-winning film *Saving Private Ryan* is criticised (March issue) for not making reference to the British contribution to the Allied landings on D-Day?

Saving Private Ryan deals with a fictitious incident involving a fictitious American sub-Unit in the American sector.

INTEREST REVIVED IN CLASSIC AIRCRAFT

I WAS interested to read the article Stringbag to fly again (March issue), particularly as it refers to NF389.

When I was stationed at HMS Merlin in late 1946 I noticed one day six Swordfish aircraft parked near the Repair Yard. Shortly afterwards they disappeared inside to re-emerge sometime later as two aircraft, NF389 and NF399, beautifully painted in peacetime colours. What happened to the other four I have no idea.

So it is with real interest that I look forward to the time three years hence when NF389 takes to the skies once again. I hope I am around to witness the event.

It is just 52 years since I last saw the aircraft flying and four years since we were re-united at Lee-on-Solent at the 50th anniversary of the end of the war celebrations. - F. L. Smith, Sutton Coldfield

MUCH has been said about the

Spitfire and the Battle of Britain, but the Hawker Hurricane was on an equal footing.

It has therefore been decided to form a society in respect of the Hurricane, which fought valiantly throughout the war in several different roles.

Membership will be open to all with an interest in the aircraft. Contact me for details, or Mr Tim Warren, 19, Four Acres, East Malling, Kent ME19 6AY. - I. Arnold, 86 Totland Close, Farnborough.

The Hawker Sea Hurricane was the first British single-seat monoplane to be used aboard aircraft carriers of the Royal Navy. It was also used as a catapult fighter from the decks of merchant ships. - Ed.

Defiance to the last

REGARDING B.C. Broadley's letter about HMS Defiance (March issue), not only did we have snooker tables, we had a Naafi bar (Symonds from the barrel and bottled beer) plus Naafi girls to serve tea, cream buns and Eccles cakes at stand-easy.

We were classed as a floating 'stone frigate'. I was aboard 1952-53 as E. M. Workshop Sweeper and the Captains Boats Crew.

The Captain lived ashore and was taken off by dinghy in the morning, home for lunch, back in the afternoon and then home again for supper.

The Captain's motor boat Coxswain was PO Jan Nicols, ex-Amethyst Cox'n. - F. McKeown, Glasgow.

I HAD the pleasure of taking two courses at HMS Defiance, in 1948 and 1952-53. HMS Exe was also part of the arrangement, providing steam to the group. Inconstant, the wooden frigate of 1868, had the billiard table on board, as well as the cinema.

Being anchored off Wilcove Point, there were few times that the table could not be used due to any ship movement.

At that time we also had X-Craft midget submarines alongside Exe, carrying out training exercises off Plymouth. Happy days, even when scrubbing Inconstant's beautiful wooden upper deck, barefooted in winter! - K. Booth, Solihull.

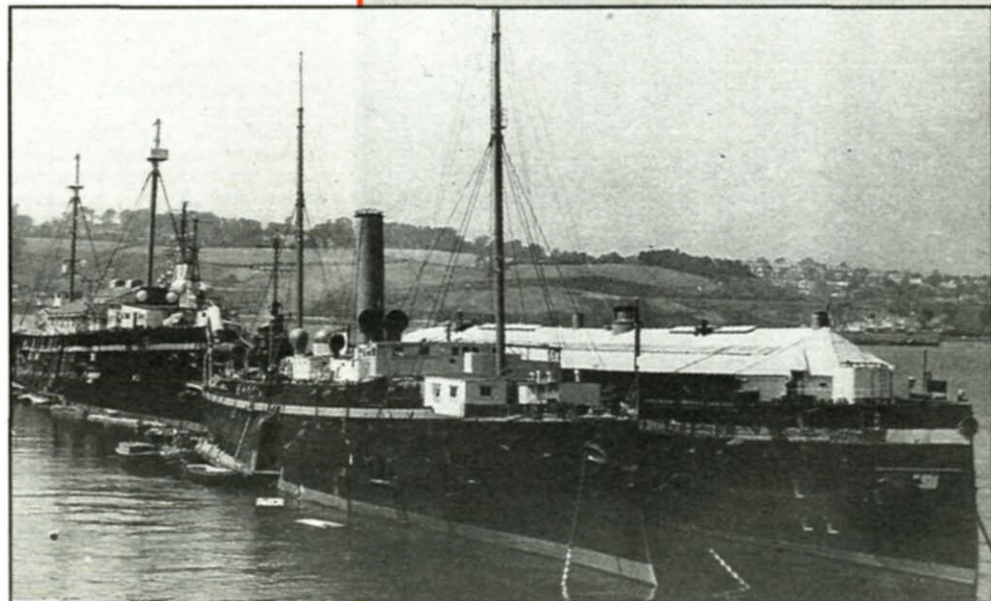
I SPENT some time in HMS Defiance, caulking the decks as part of my shipwright's training in 1948. The billiard balls used to run to one side when the ship's company fell in.

Andromeda also had an enclosed Captain's walkway on the stern. - R.B.D.F., Gosport.

PLYMOUTH Command trained TAS and hard hat divers at HMS Defiance and the newly formed Electrical Branch of 1947 until 1955, when it was decided to close it down as it had become a fire hazard.

Many foreign navies were pleased to send their people there for technical training, as well as our own RNRs. - O. G. Thomas, Caldicot, Mon.

● HMS Defiance in the early 1950s, consisting of Inconstant (right), Vulcan (left) and Andromeda (astern). The funnels of HMS Howe can be seen just astern of Andromeda.



Navy News

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● **TAKING THE PLUNGE:** LD Eamon Fullen prepares to enter the icy water with a rare and dangerous four-metre leopard seal which appeared close to HMS Endurance at Dundee Island.

Chilling moment for Endurance divers

AS ICE patrol ship HMS Endurance was heading home from the Antarctic she had a chilling experience to report.

During a dive in the freezing waters off Dundee Island the ship's diving team were joined by a huge leopard seal, reputed to be one of the most dangerous killers in Antarctic waters.

Little is known about these rare creatures except that they have been known to stalk and attack humans without provocation.

But the divers, led by Lt Stuart Long and LD Eamon Fullen, were undeterred by the four-metre long, half-tonne animal.

LD Fullen said: "In my 14 years of diving I have never experienced such an amazing and potentially dangerous dive."

"When the leopard seal opens its mouth inches away from you and



● **KILLER: the Leopard Seal**

you can count its many teeth, you begin to wonder whether being in the water with it is such a good idea.

"Fortunately, we had just seen it feed on a penguin, so I hoped it wouldn't be too hungry!"

During the deployment the team has explored many locations in the Antarctic and at the South Georgia Garrison, including dives with dolphins and hump backed whales.

LD Fullen's encounter was the latest adventure in a remarkable life. He was awarded the QGM after dramatic rescues during the Zeebrugge ferry disaster and survived a broken neck in 1990 and an altitude induced heart attack on Mount Everest in 1996.

Last year he fell just short of setting a new mountaineering record on Mount Shkhara in Georgia but is hoping to make history on his return from Antarctica by becoming the first man to climb all 47 of the highest mountains in Europe.

Other notable achievements in HMS Endurance were made by aviators Lt Cdr Mark Greaves and Lts Steve Hilson and Stephen Crockatt, who all clocked-up their 2,000 flying hours within two months of each other.

And after the ship's three-day Winter Olympics at Rothera Survey Base deep within Antarctica (Navy News April 99) she received a flying visit from Flag Officer Surface Flotilla, Rear Admiral Peter Franklyn.

The Admiral flew to the Falkland Islands from RAF Brize Norton before completing his journey to Rothera by British Antarctic Survey Dash 7 aircraft.

The trip gave Admiral Franklyn his first taste of Antarctica and he was soon sharpening his ice-breaking skills by driving the ship through heavy pack ice.

And before he began his long journey back to Portsmouth he was thoroughly briefed on all aspects of HMS Endurance's work and the many achievements that she has made during her deployment.



● **CHAMPAGNE ON ICE:** HMS Endurance aviators Lt Cdr Mark Greaves, Lt Steve Hilson and Lt Stephen Crockatt celebrate 6,000 flying hours with the ship's CO, Captain Tim Barton.



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People in the Front Line



In Brief

THE BLACK and white stripes of Newcastle United might be evident in the Type 42 destroyer, but members of the club's Toon Army are more difficult to spot.

In fact – according to LS Al Crawford – there are probably more Sunderland fans on board, and he is one.

"I'm a season ticket holder," he said. "Last year I only saw eight games, but I've seen 16 this season, home and away."

THE Gulf deployment was a family affair for LMEM Gary Jones, of HMS Newcastle, who serves alongside his brother-in-law LMEM Andrew Cooper, and whose brother MEM Neil Jones is on board Invincible.

The brothers, from Liverpool, managed to meet up in Dubai.

THERE was a royal visitor to a radio roadshow staged by members of the ship's company of HMS Cumberland.

WOM(C)1 Angela Firth donned regal costume for her celebrated impression of the Queen – she also does a Jimmy Saville impersonation – during the AC/DC Roadshows on the ship's flight deck.

AN EXTENDED spell at sea need not get in the way of land-based pastimes, as the ship's company of HMS Cumberland demonstrated.

The flight deck of the Type 22 frigate was the setting for a field gun competition between messes while the ship was in the Gulf.

Using fenders for the barrels, and gym weights on bars for the gun carriages, the teams followed the spirit of the Royal Tournament showdown, if not the letter of the rules.

The spoils of the event went to the Wardroom team of Executive Officer Lt Cdr Steve Hooper, Lt Guy Allison, Lt P.J. Wills, S/Lt Jon Nicholson and Lt Dom Millman.

Unlikely bridge partners

AN UNLIKELY duo can sometimes be seen driving the HMS Invincible.

When not working in the Main Communications Office, Yeoman Nick Gwatkin may be found on the bridge of the carrier, gaining bridge experience before joining BRNC Dartmouth as a Senior Upper Yardman.

As a yeoman, he is no stranger to bridges, having served in HM ships Ariadne, Achilles, Boxer and Battleaxe, and he joined Invincible from Gibraltar last year.

Although not currently eligible for his bridge watchkeeping certificate, the watches Nick (29) has

kept prompted his Commanding Officer, Capt James Burnell-Nugent, to comment that he was "holding his own with other Officers of the Watch."

Nick is never left alone during his time in charge, and is pictured with his Second Officer of the Watch, Surg Cdr Adrian Jordan, the ship's dental surgeon.

Adrian joined Invincible in September having previously served in HMS Fearless and ashore at Raleigh and Warrior.

Adrian (39) doesn't mind playing second fiddle to Nick, confessing that the ship is probably safer when the Yeoman is in charge.



Texan made to feel at home in carrier



● Proud man – Lt Justin Shoger USN raises the Texan flag.

TEXAN Justin Shoger had the honour of raising his home state's flag in HMS Invincible in the Gulf.

Lt Shoger is currently serving as a Sea King observer with 849 Squadron, the carrier's airborne early warning unit, and has been with Invincible for a year.

"This is something completely different," said Justin.

"I was thrilled that the Commanding Officer was able to let me put the flag up."

"I collect flags, and to be able to say that my Texas flag flew over HMS Invincible is something really special."

Justin, from Dallas, came to the UK in October 1997, and will return to the United States after completing three years.

"It's been a lot of fun, and I've met a lot of good people," he said.

"It's definitely different here to American carriers."

"The social life is wonderful over here, and because it is smaller you can get to know people better all the way through the ship and squadron."



● CPO Terry Simmons.

Hobbies while away sea time

ARTS and crafts are flourishing in some quarters of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary during the long hours on station.

Two members of the ship's company of RFA Fort Austin have been in demand during the latest deployment.

STD Lee Greenwood, from Southampton, makes intricate cards by hand for anyone on board.

"It's just a little hobby," he said.

"I don't drink or go down to the bar, so it helps to pass the time."

"I do all sorts of cards, some with artificial flowers, and I charge just enough to cover the cost of materials."

Meanwhile Bosun Terry Simmons, from Hastings, relaxes by painting – and the results of his labours have been snapped up by colleagues.

Terry, who has been in the RFA for 31 years, took it up about six years ago on the suggestion of his wife.

"It's a marvellous hobby – I couldn't shut my door at night and not do anything," he said.

"I'm not good enough to support myself if I was to leave, but when I retire it will be a nice little earner."

But he's not ready to turn his back on the sea yet.

"I think this job is great – it's different every week," he said.

"You are not stuck in an office. I love it, though it does take you away from your family."



● STD Lee Greenwood.

Hard work is rewarded

THERE are always improvements to be made in any sphere of work – and some of those striving for improvement were recognised at the Captain's efficiency awards held in Invincible while on patrol.

CPOWEA McCarthy won the monthly efficiency award for his efforts in solving technical problems, often while "suffering the extremes of wind, movement and heat at the top of the mast" and working through visits to Dubai.

A Gems award was made to POWAEM(M) Horne, who on her own initiative conducted a thorough review of flight deck motor servicing, and her revised schedules should lengthen the life of equipment bringing large savings.

Finally, Capt Burnell-Nugent handed over the Acteon Prize from HMS Collingwood to OM(EW) Cook, for the best all-round performance on the OM1 course for last autumn term.

Pictures by POA(PHOT) Kev Preece and LA(PHOT)s Rich Matthey, Nathan Dua and Gary Davies

History beneath the captain's table

THE Task Group supply ship RFA Fort Austin carries a piece of history around with her.

The underside of the table in the conference room is covered in graffiti from the Falklands War, made by people sheltering from Argentinian air attacks in San Carlos Water.

One example, from May 25, 1982, made by an air squadron lieutenant, saying he "hid his timorous body under this table yet again, believing that if he couldn't see the Mirages, they certainly couldn't see him."

Visitors are usually invited under the table by Capt Alan Roach (pictured) to view the historic scribbles.



Air Force one in Gulf

THERE may have been no RAF GR7 Harriers on board Invincible in the Gulf, but there was still an Air Force presence in the shape of Junior Technician Jane McFarlane.

Jane joined the RAF in 1988, but hardly imagined her posting to 1001 Signals Unit, RAF Oakington, in Hampshire, would lead to a

life on the ocean wave.

She volunteered for the posting as satellite communications equipment maintainer to broaden her experience and indulge a passion for travel.

But she noted that her interest in swimming had been difficult to satisfy on board, despite being surrounded by water...



● RAF Jnr Tech Jane McFarlane.

● Work party – members of the ship's company of HMS Invincible renovated an old graveyard in Dubai. The party included (from left) CPO Stafford, Rev Poll, PO Hallat, Mr Woodward, Lt Gorman, S/Lt Parton, S/Lt Carroll, S/Lt Richards and S/Lt Ball.



Kosovo halts Nottingham's exercise

A NATO exercise which was intended to form HMS Nottingham's last deployment before she began a year-long refit was cancelled in the wake of the Kosovo crisis.

Instead of arriving at Portsmouth at the end of April as was originally intended, the Type 42 destroyer reached home on April 15 after a

drastically re-arranged programme. She fired a 17-gun salute as she entered port, to mark the end of her second commission. It has lasted over seven years during which she travelled almost a quarter of a million miles.

Nottingham was due to visit Tunis and Malta during the scratched Exercise Destined Glory, but instead called at Catania in Sicily, the

Spanish ports of Malaga – where her ship's company witnessed the spectacular Easter devotional parade – and La Coruna.

Her first stop in the Mediterranean was Gibraltar for a week's gunnery in support of a principal warfare officers course.

Members of the ship's company held a Rock race and met up with wives and girlfriends, one of the

more popular activities on offer being snowboarding in the Sierra Nevada mountains of Spain.

While she was away, the ship's company raised over £300 for Comic Relief, having had a special supply of red noses delivered. They were sent out on a routine RAF flight, with the help of Swindon's Sainsbury store manager Bill Baldwin and Flt Lt Simon Ling at RAF Lyneham.

Chatham Navy Days free to Service people

Cavalier's arrival day fixed

HMS CAVALIER is expected to arrive at her new home at Chatham on Sunday May 16.

The date has been announced by the HMS Cavalier (Chatham) Trust.

The culmination of her towed journey from Hebburn-on-Tyne will be marked by a celebration involving entertainment at The Strand, Gillingham where people are being advised to gather to witness her mid-morning arrival.

Meanwhile, members of over 50 Naval associations are expected to attend the first Showcase Reunion organised by the HMS Cavalier Association. The weekend event will be centred at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham.

The hotel, founded as a Naafi club in 1948, plans to name a suite after HMS Cavalier during the reunion.

Information from Sid Anning on 01752 768201 or Debbie Degiorgio at the King Charles Hotel on 01634 830303.

Cornwall's freedom visit

HMS CORNWALL has reaffirmed her Freedom of Cornwall by marching through the county city, Truro, accompanied by the Royal Marines Band Lymington.

The Type 22 frigate berthed at Falmouth for the four-day visit which included a service of thanksgiving in Truro Cathedral and a reception at the County Hall.

A Meet the Navy day was organised on board for local headmasters and careers advisers, and tours were arranged for local schoolchildren.

During the visit a total of £1,200 was presented by the ship's compa-

ny to local charities. The money had been raised on board during the ship's West Africa deployment last year.

CHATHAM Navy Days will be free to members of the Armed Forces – as long as they go in uniform and produce Service identification.

The announcement, which also applies to Service people's families, was made by the organisers of the event to be held at Chatham Historic Dockyard on May 29-31.

Navy Days Director Bill Fowler said: "Chatham Navy Days is an opportunity for us to be proud of our Armed Forces. Offering free entry to serving personnel is a small token of our gratitude for the work they do."

Pre-booked family tickets for the event are £10, with three-day passes for families being sold at £24 each.

Over 1,500 Naval personnel are already expected to arrive in Chatham in support of the event, which includes the Type 42 destroyer HMS Exeter and the patrol vessel HMS Dasher, as well as displays and exhibitions ashore.

"Allowing other serving members of the Armed Forces free entry will really add to the festival atmosphere," said Mr. Fowler.

The event is being well supported by foreign navies. Germany is sending two minehunters and a supply ship. The Dutch will be represented by the frigate Karel Doorman, the French by the mine-

hunter Casiopee, and the Poles by the survey ship Heweliusz. The Belgians are sending the naval training vessel Zenobe Gramme and the Americans the fast patrol vessel USS Cyclone.

Biggest of the sailing ships will be the Russian Sedov, while a fleet of historic vessels will include steam tugs, a wartime RAF rescue launch, a sailing barge and up to 40 Dunkirk little ships.

Plans for the air display have been finalised and involve Jaguar, Tornado and Harrier jets, Sea King, Lynx and Gazelle helicopters, and World War II aircraft of the historic flights of the Fleet Air Arm, the RAF and the Imperial War Museum.

If booked before May 14, adult tickets are £4 and £1.60 for children (after that date prices are £5 and £2 with family tickets at £12). Chatham Navy Days ticket hotline is 01634 823807.



Orwell puts new badge on show

HMS ORWELL'S new funnel badge of the First Patrol Boat Squadron – a flying fish with a scorpion's tail – is displayed by the ship, pictured in the River Dart. Orwell is the only River-class minesweeper remaining in service with the Royal Navy, all the other 14 ships of the squadron being Archer-class patrol vessels.

Under her new Commanding Officer, Lt Ian Clarke, Orwell will operate mainly off the South Coast this summer, providing navigation training for young officers at Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth.

What Lord Lewin wished to be remembered for

JUST A day before he died, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Lewin said that he would most like to be remembered for improving mutual respect between officers and ratings.

Vice Admiral Sir Roderick MacDonald repeated his words in an eulogy at a service, held at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel, Greenwich, in celebration of the life of the former Chief of the Defence Staff.

Admiral MacDonald said the last time he spoke to Admiral Lewin, he had said he had had a marvellous life.

"He paused and then said quiet-

ly: 'But what I would like to be remembered for is a real improvement of attitude and mutual respect between officer and rating, and the effect that this has had on the wellbeing and efficiency of the Navy'."

The Queen was represented by the Duke of Edinburgh. Also attending the service – conducted by the Chaplain of the Fleet, Dr Charles Stewart – were a host of present and former political and military leaders.

A second service was being held on May 1, starting at noon, at the Church of St Thomas The Martyr, Newcastle, not at Greenwich as reported in our April issue.

For details contact Mr Jewett on 01661 853197.

■ Newsview – page 20.

702 Squadron's 21st birthday

THE LYNX aircrew and maintenance training unit, 702 Naval Air Squadron, has celebrated its 21st birthday at RN air station Yeovilton.

The event was timed to coincide with a wings parade, during which observer badges were presented to Rear Admiral Jonathon Band, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff, and to Lts Catherine Maley and Stewart McMichael. Admiral Band also opened the newly completed squadron building.

A birthday cake was cut by Jane Raggett, wife of 702's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Andy Raggett, and by Lt McMichael, the youngest student on course.

Uranium risks: info released

A PAPER detailing the risks associated with depleted uranium, used in some British ammunition, has been published by the Ministry of Defence.

Announcing the move, Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson said it was important to be completely open on the issue, and that of Gulf veterans' illnesses.

He added that in the context of the Gulf War the risks associated with depleted uranium had been small. "I am not aware of any UK Gulf veteran who is suffering from a depleted uranium related illness."



This Hagar is far from horrible

A JUNIOR rates bar designed to rival any pub in Civvy Street is opened by the Commander of Devonport Naval Base, Commodore Jonathon Reeve.

The £190,000 development, dubbed Hagar's (Hagar the Horrible being a strip-cartoon character), is within Drake Club and has been financed by the Ministry of Defence with XL Leisure, an arm of Naafi.

Fitted out in the style of a theme pub, the bar is decorated with pictures and items based on the TV comedy show *Only Fools and Horses*. Facilities include a fast-food outlet, pool table, darts, a live entertainment area and satellite and terrestrial TV shown on a large screen.

Picture: LA(PHOT) Jack Russell

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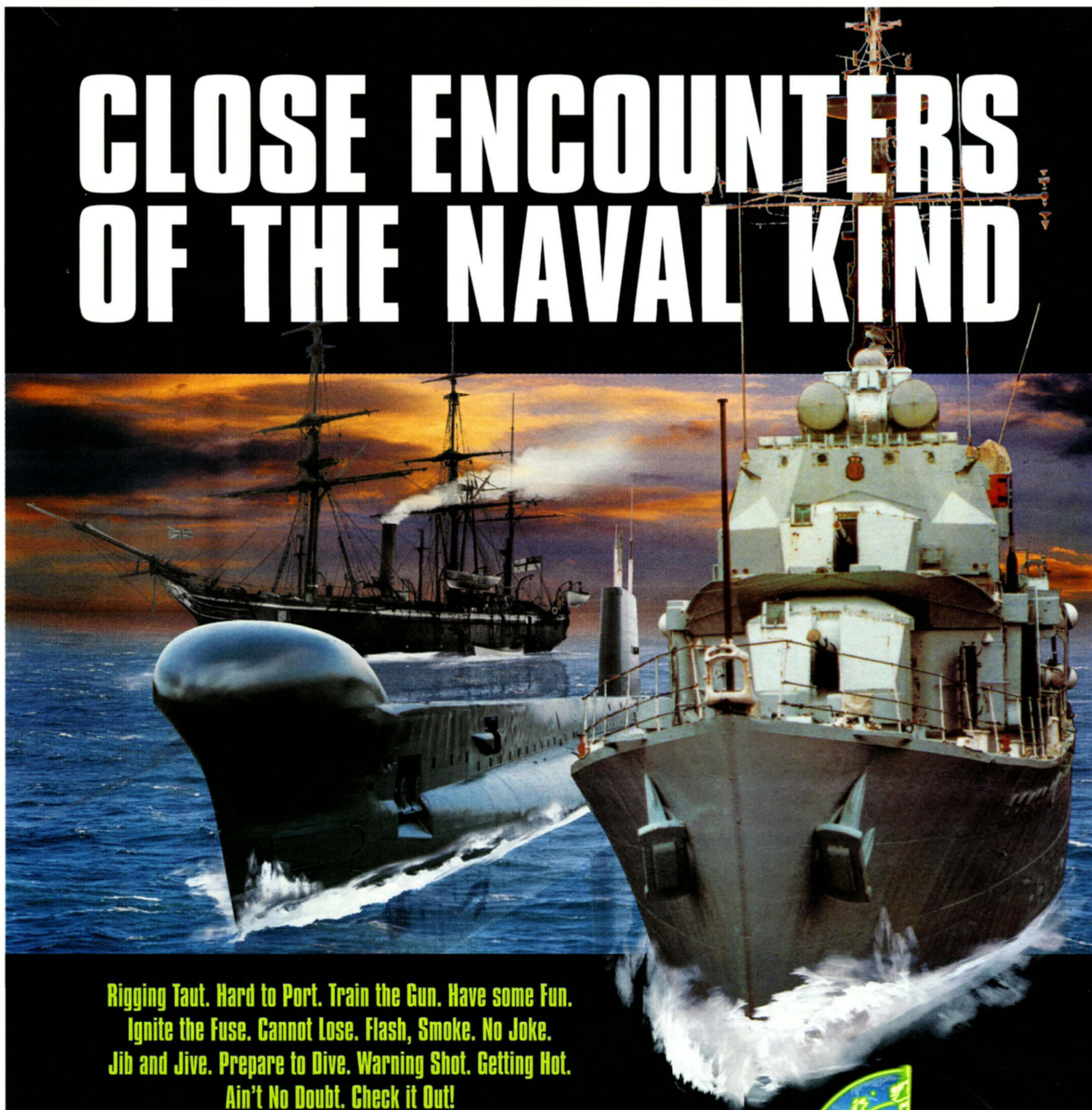
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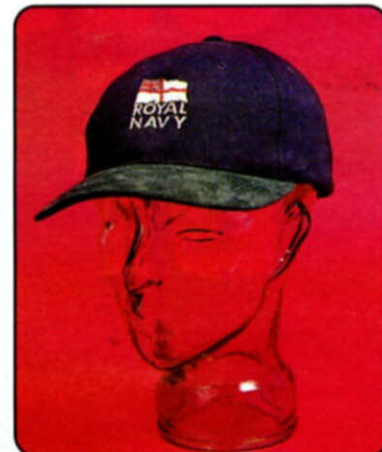


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ROUND-UK RECRUITING TRIP BY LONDON

HMS LONDON, due to be paid off for disposal in June, is taking a curtain call – a month-long recruiting tour around Britain.

Earlier this year the Type 22 frigate returned to Devonport streaming a 500ft paying-off pennant, but she's been brought out of semi-retirement to support a nation-wide recruiting drive.

She will act as a platform for a series of visits sponsored by local RN Careers Offices. As well as conducting tours for visitors from schools, colleges and universities, the ship is hosting careers staff

Defence 'at heart' of Modernising Govt plan

A PLEDGE that the Ministry of Defence will be at the heart of the 'Modernising Government' initiative has been made by Defence Secretary George Robertson.

As the employer of over 300,000 people in the Armed Forces and Civil Service, he said he applauded the White Paper on the modernising initiative by Cabinet Office Minister Dr Jack Cunningham.

"Modernising Government is about the public sector delivering results and valuing all our public servants," he said. "I am determined that MOD will be at the heart of the Modernising Government programme which will benefit my people and the public alike."

Examples of MOD best practice in modernising the way the Government did business included – as well as the Strategic Defence Review – provision of joint medical care with military doctors working alongside NHS colleagues, the veteran advice unit set up recently, and the award-winning GEMS suggestion scheme.

"The GEMS scheme has been a particular success," he said. "Each year MOD staff generate ideas which save the taxpayer some £15 million."

Ministers also point with pride to the new agencies which are taking over the administration of large areas of Defence business.

Among the latest to be formed are agencies dealing with procurement, transport and movements, and munitions for all three Services.

On April 7 Defence Minister John Spellar opened the Defence Aviation and Repair Agency (DARA) at St Athan near Cardiff. It brings together the military's fixed-wing and helicopter repair facilities, including the former RN aircraft yard at Fleetlands (Gosport), the largest helicopter repair facility in Europe.

from local employment agencies and Job Centres. Her hangar is being used for displays and video shows explaining the Navy's role, while members of the ship's company are on hand to talk to visitors about their jobs and careers.

Groups of potential recruits are joining the frigate for sea passages between ports of call. Among those embarked for the first leg of the tour between Plymouth and Leith in April were 24 students and two teachers from Torquay, and on a later trip to Swansea, students from Plymouth College of Further Education were being embarked.

Other destinations included Harwich and Liverpool.

The ship's Commanding Officer, Cdr Tony McBarnet, said the tour presented an ideal opportunity to show off the Navy to potential recruits and raise the awareness of the Service in the community as a whole.



Bicester's damage busters

IF YOU want the best in the Fleet for damage limitation – call for some of these men from HMS Bicester. The minehunter's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Damage control team have won the Fleet NBCD Challenge Trophy, being awarded here for their outstanding performance during operational training.

The trophy was presented to the ship's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr David Williams, by the Deputy Flag Officer Surface Flotilla, Commodore Laurie Hopkins. With them are (from left) CCMEA Ken Robinson, AB John Jones, CH Mark Chadwick and PO(MW) Neil Clark.

Sailing Navy food wasn't all *that* bad

NEW INSIGHTS into life in the Navy of the 18th and 19th centuries are being presented in the latest permanent exhibition to be opened as part of the Royal Naval Museum's redevelopment.

The interactive display at Portsmouth was opened to the public on April 24 and dispels many of the myths surrounding the way sailors lived in the Service's wooden ships.

A special video shows that food on board was much better than generally thought, and great pains were taken to ensure that ships' companies were healthy and fit. The exhibition also demonstrates that big battles like that of Trafalgar were relatively rare.

On May 7 the Museum's president, the Princess Royal, will officially open the gallery, marking the completion of its £5 million development plan.

VCs on Internet

AN INTERNET website is to be set up to honour the valour of those awarded the Victoria Cross and George Cross.

Speaking at the VC and GC Association's 20th reunion dinner, Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson said the site would provide a valuable archive. Once established it would be updated by the Imperial War Museum.

Final act at Portland

THE FORMAL closure of RN air station Portland – HMS Osprey – on March 31 marked the end of 150 years of Naval links with the island.

The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, said that as the ensign was hauled down the Navy could be proud of what it had achieved there.

"The consistent maintenance of operational capability at the optimum level has been commendable and in the finest traditions of the Fleet Air Arm," he said. "I am heartened that the professional acumen and *esprit de corps* that has become synonymous with the Lynx community is already being felt at Yeovilton."

CHATHAM NAVY DAYS TICKET WINNERS

WINNERS of the Navy News competition for 50 family tickets for Chatham Navy Days, run in our March edition are:

D. F. Abbs, Cromer; J. Gale, Warminster; Mr & Mrs Osborne, Tamworth; R. Small, Sunderland; B. Pepprell, Haverfordwest; J. F. Revell, Dover; R. W. Worwood, Birmingham; M. E. Turner, Lincoln; Mrs Griffiths, Dartford; C. W. Cook, Reading; B. Haley, Darlington; G. T. Cole, Sittingbourne; S. Peters, Warrington; M. D. Hall, Osbaldwick; M. F. Chapman, Duxford; J. Taylor, Westcliff-on-Sea; S. J. Purcell, Romford; L. Jeffrey, Sheerness; P. Sharp, Basingstoke; J. Williams, Catford; C. Thirle, S. Norwood; V. F. Dunham, Aylesford; G. F.

Chowles, Sudlip; C. Robinson, Preston; N. Ferneyhough, Rochester; J. D. Higgins, Berrow; A. J. Easton, Sleaford; G. A. Lowe, Brerley Hill; J. Bright, Sittingbourne; G. Kay, Rainham; R. Dolen, Thames Mead; P. T. Corner, Ipswich; K. Taylor, E. Grinstead; J. Bullock, Stoughbridge; D. E. Cole, Portsmouth; J. D. O'Brien, Manchester; J. R. Harvey, Portsmouth; R. Lowes, Lower Highgate; R. J. Bowles, Saffron Walden; K. R. Batchelor, Ware; G. Burns, Basingstoke; P. McLaren, Bognor Regis; M. J. Napper, Clevedon; M. A. Stokes, Rochford; Winters family, Birmingham; W. Butler, Islington; D. F. Whybrow, Chatham; R. Chapman, Epping; J. S. Buckingham, Northampton; L. W. Sherwood, Folkestone.

End of 1st Frigate Squadron

WITH THE paying off of three Type 22 Batch II frigates, the First and Second Frigate Squadrons are to be amalgamated.

The merged squadron will become the Second Frigate Squadron on September 1, Captain F2 remaining as the Commanding Officer of HMS Cornwall.

Other vessels of the squadron – composed of Type 22 frigates – will be HM ships Chatham, Campbelltown, Cumberland, Coventry, Sheffield, Brave and Boxer (which is due for disposal at the end of November).

Also, the duty of Captain Initial Sea Training will transfer to the Commanding Officer of HMS Chatham on June 1.

MOD launches news service

AN ELECTRONIC news service has been launched by the Ministry of Defence for its personnel.

Titled MOD OnLine, it is being run by the Directorate of Internal Communications and Media Training and will eventually be available to everyone in MOD on networked computer.

It aims to provide the "real story" when media reports are inaccurate or sensationalist and to provide an interactive service which will help to improve internal communication.

The service intends to deliver directly to desktops by 10am each day, covering the main internal and external defence news stories and announcements.

Subjects covered range from Kosovo to Iraq, as well as pay, policy, personnel, sports and social news. (Details in General Defence Council Instruction 69/99).

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£1,000 gift to Sailing Trust for disabled

THE £1,000 proceeds of charitable events run by Cheshunt branch over the past few years have been presented to the Jubilee Sailing Trust in the hope that they will be used to send a physically disabled ex-RN person on one of the Trust's voyages.

The Trust's tall ship Lord Nelson offers voyages to physically disabled and able-bodied people aged from 16 to over 70.

The £1,000 gift was presented to the secretary of the Trust's South Essex branch, John Marshall, by Cheshunt branch's president, Shipmate Harold Chalkley, in the presence of 76 members.

In return, Mr Marshall presented a framed photograph of the Lord Nelson to the branch.

Arun relics presented to museum

MENTOS of the River-class minesweeper HMS Arun, which is now serving with the Brazilian Navy, have gone on show at Littlehampton's town museum.

A ceremonial lifebelt, a crucifix with an inscribed RNA plaque, and other, framed mementos, were handed over to the Association's Littlehampton branch when the ship was handed over to the Brazilians earlier this year.

In turn they were presented to the Chairman of Arun District Council, Cllr Tony Williamson, by the branch chairman, Shipmate Tom Harrison.

Douglas is Area victor

BRANCH member Shipmate Douglas Hughes won the No. 7 Area standard bearer's competition hosted by Monmouth branch.

Naval Quirks



Memorial to Lucknow VC

A SAILOR who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his valour while fighting over 500 miles from the sea was honoured by Greenwich branch of the RNA when a memorial to him was unveiled at Brompton cemetery.

The Association members were guests at the ceremony for boatswain's mate John Harrison who was interred at the cemetery in 1865. He had never fully recovered from the wounds and illness he had suffered while serving with the Naval Brigade during the Indian Mutiny campaign eight years before.

Harrison, with another rating and an officer (Lt Nowell Salmon) volunteered to climb a tree during

the Battle of Lucknow to spot the enemy's positions on the town walls from where they were tossing grenades on to the crews of the Naval Brigade's gun battery.

Harrison's fellow rating was killed by musket fire, and Salmon - who also received the VC - was wounded.

Harrison received his medal from Queen Victoria in person in 1858. He was discharged from the Navy a year later to join Customs and Excise. He never married.

Greenwich branch's standard was paraded in honour of another early VC holder - sailor John Taylor who was awarded the medal

for his action as a member of the Naval Brigade at Sebastopol during the Crimean War in 1855.

Taylor died a pauper and was buried in a common grave at Woolwich. Now, Greenwich branch hold an annual memorial service in his honour at Woolwich, conducted by the branch chaplain.

Around the Branches

Aldershot

The branch's new standard was dedicated, and the old one laid up at the Royal Garrison Church of All Saints.

The service was conducted by the Ven Simon J. Golding, Archdeacon to the Royal Navy, after which 25 standards were paraded - including the national standard, with veterans marching to the music of the Sea Cadet band of TS Swiftsure.

The salute was taken by No. 3

Area president, Admiral Sir Derek Reffell; Maj Gen T. J. Sullivan; and the Mayor of Rushmoor, Cllr Peter Moyle. Others present included the president of TS Swiftsure, Capt A. E. Thomson RN; the Assistant Chaplain General, the Rev P. Howson (Chaplain to HQ Aldershot); and Gerald Howarth MP.

Loughton

Members welcomed AB Paul Heywood, a survivor of HMS Antelope which was lost in the Falklands campaign, and who now serves in HMS Ark Royal. Paul's fiancée, Jenny, was also welcomed as an associate member.

At the branch's annual general meeting, Shipmate Harry Bowers, former vice president, was installed as president. He received his badge of office from the chairman, Shipmate Pete Tipler.

Deeside

The 175th anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution was marked at a service of thanksgiving arranged by the branch and RNLI at St Mark's Church, Connahs Quay.

The service was conducted by the Rev Paul Varah, and the lessons were read by the Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, Sir William Gladstone, and Flint Lifeboat cox'n, Chris Barnes. Standards and representatives of other ex-Service associations attended.

Refreshments were provided at Deeside Naval Club where a collection raised over £100 for the RNLI's local branch.

Southport

Despite six changes of address, the branch has flourished, thanks to its committee. Planned events include one to Skelmersdale branch and participation in a Battle of the Atlantic service and parade.

Members meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month at the Conservative Club, Bath Street.

Blandford

The branch's annual service of remembrance to the First World War Collingwood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division will be held at 1500 on June 4. The unit was virtually wiped out at Gallipoli for which they embarked on June 4, 1915.

The service will be conducted by the Chaplain of HMS Collingwood

at the Collingwood Memorial near the entrance to Blandford Camp on the A354. All are welcome.

Cardiff

Branch chairman Gordon Phillips was voted Shipmate of the Year, and received his trophy from Shipmate Peter Evans.

Members' full programme of activities included a visit on April 24 to the Fleet Air Arm Museum at RN air station Yeovilton, followed by a visit to Cwmbran branch. A visit to HMS Cardiff was planned for May 3.

The branch meets each Monday at 1930 at the Ashgrove Hotel, Newport Road, Cardiff, and welcomes new members.

Ferndown

Members held a gala party to celebrate the 19th anniversary of the branch.

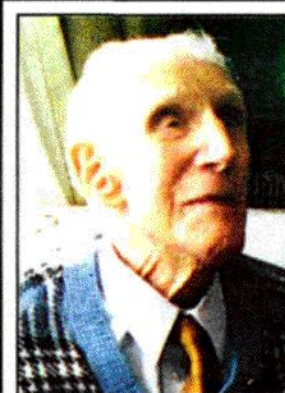
Over 100 attended and were entertained by the Bob Collins Disco.

The birthday cake was cut by the president, Shipmate G. Curtis and his wife.

Skelmersdale

Comedian and singer Shep Woolley supplied the entertainment at a social evening held by Skelmersdale for various other branches from No. 10 Area.

1915 veteran reaches his century



HONORARY member of Hobart branch in Tasmania, Shipmate Harold Kitchens has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Harold, who joined the Royal Navy in 1915 and served in both World Wars, was head of the key Allied communications base for South-East Asia Command at Trincomalee, Ceylon during the latter part of the war against Japan.

Later, in 1947, he was seconded to the Royal Australian Navy where he first served at Watson's Bay, Sydney, then as secretary of the Joint Communications Committee at the Defence Department in Melbourne, and finally as officer-in-charge of HMAS Coonawarra, the RAN's communications base in Darwin.

After his retirement he took part in research on guidance and communications systems for the Australian government.

Music and scientific and medical research remain his great interests. He keeps up to date by reading research journals and *The Economist* - still without the need for reading glasses - and he plays his electronic organ daily.



● Mayoral honour for Mid-Antrim branch treasurer, Shipmate Neil Hamilton, as the Mayor of Ballymena, Cllr James Currie, presents him with his life membership certificate, watched by associate member, Shipmate Joe McKernan.

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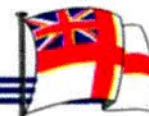
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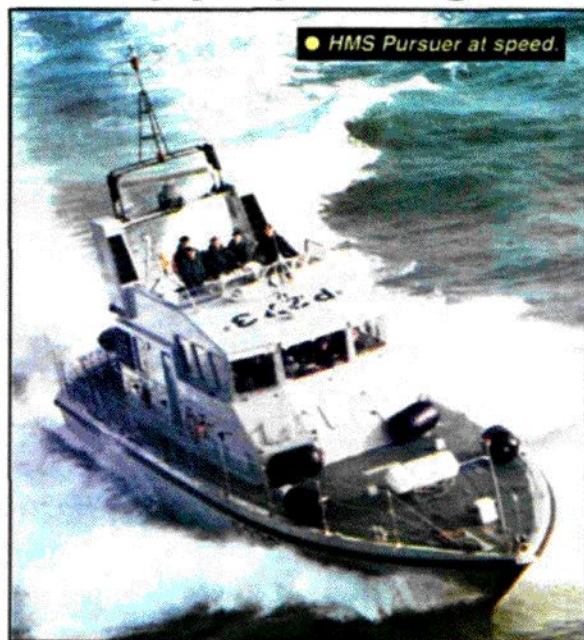
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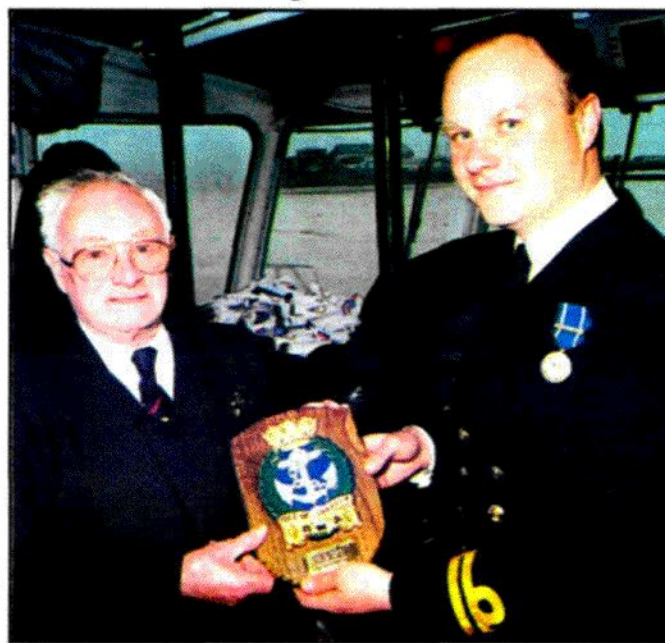
THIS presentation of Isle of Sheppey's branch plaque to HMS Pursuer was the culmination of a visit which forged strong links between the two.

The plaque is being presented by Shipmate Jack Pleasance to the Commanding Officer of Pursuer, Lt Matthew Reed, on the fast patrol vessel's bridge.

Pursuer, attached to Sussex University RN Unit, had been visiting Queensborough where the small ship's company and trainees, as well as RNA representatives, were guests at a reception held by the Mayor of Swale Borough Council and Queensborough.

Later in the visit, 12 branch members were welcomed on board Pursuer for a tour of the vessel and light refreshments.

Other of the branch's activities have included a fish-and-chips supper as guests of Bromley branch, and attendance at Sheppey's monthly meeting of Sea Cadets and staff from Chatham Recruiting Office.



What went on at the AGMs . . .

A HEALTHY bank balance was reported at Hereford branch annual general meeting by the treasurer, Shipmate Frank Short - who was presented with his life membership badge.

Other awards included life vice-presidencies for Shipmates Ernie Johnstone and Eddie Davies.

Standard bearer and welfare officer, Shipmate Mark Burgess, was elected Shipmate of the Year, and the Associate Member's Cup went to Mary Hill. Branch president, Shipmate Roy Wood, presided, with Shipmate Nigel Trigg in the chair.

At the Carshalton meeting a successful year was reported, with a membership increase to 63.

Shipmate Alan Plant presided at the Leicester meeting where there was high praise for the stalwart work of the welfare officer, Shipmate Ron Lee, and the social secretary, Shipmate Tony Bird. It was agreed that the branch charity for the year would be the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust.

It was 'up spirits' after the Chichester meeting to celebrate 50 years' service to the branch by the vice president, Shipmate Sid Dewitt, and his wife Joan. Apart from branch activities, Sid keeps an eye on the Seamen's Chapel in Chichester Cathedral to ensure that the ship's bell there is always gleaming.

Life memberships were presented at the Southend-on-Sea meeting to the chairman, Shipmate Stanley Horner, and to Shipmate Les Farmer. The vice president, Shipmate Gerry Coulson, did the honours.

Seventy-five members attended the meeting, at which Shipmate Derek Dawson was re-elected vice chairman; Shipmate Norman Summerhayes was re-elected secretary; and Shipmates Dennis Dewison, John Bradbury and Fred Woollard were re-elected to the committee.

At Skelmersdale AGM, life membership certificates were presented to Shipmates Bill Fenney, a founder member and life vice president, and Shipmate Ernie Wilkins who has retired as standard bearer after 12 years.

Southport 99 preview . . .

by Shipmate Joan Kelly

Move to cut Conference to every other year

A CALL to reduce the frequency of the RNA National Conference from an annual event to one held every other year will be debated at this year's conference held at Southport on June 19.

The proposal, by Tunbridge Wells branch, has the support of their Eastbourne shipmates, and moves that the Royal Charter be amended to read:

"A meeting of all members to be known as the biennial conference be held in every period of two calendar years."

The suggestion is being made against a background in which this year's conference has only six proposals to debate - the lowest for 20 years - and the year after the Bridlington conference agreed to only one of the ten proposals before it, where to meet in the year 2000.

The RNA annual conference is, however, more than a forum for debate. It is where Headquarters renders an account of its stewardship, where the National Council and its sub-committees report, and where policy is formed for the year ahead.

The Association leadership sees this year's very low number of motions for debate, not as indifference, but as acceptance for the way in which Headquarters is keeping

the ship on a steady course.

That members believe it is being steered in the right direction seems also to be shown by the fact that there is only one proposal for debate relating to the Association's finances:

Chester's motion (seconded by Oswestry) "That the Association's investment policy be altered to provide greater annual income, if necessary at the expense of capital growth."

The National Council is asked to take action in two proposals by Blackpool and Fylde, seconded by Wythenshawe:

"To review the supplemented Royal Charter rules and by-laws in order to propose or make amendments to clarify the requirements for trustees of RNA areas and branches."

Blackpool and Fylde also ask the Council to confirm that branches, as agents of the Association, who collect subscriptions for transmission to Headquarters, be adequately indemnified by the Association against loss.

Finally, a proposal by Southend-on-Sea branch, seconded by Clacton, seeks to give all RNA Areas names as well as numbers.

Tobruk survivor honoured

ONE OF only three remaining survivors of the 50 Royal Marines out of 350 embarked in the destroyers HM ships Sikh and Zulu sunk in Tobruk harbour has been awarded life

membership of St Albans branch.

Shipmate George Wright was captured by the Germans after the sinking and later handed over to the Italians.

PICTURE PUZZLE



WINNER of our March Picture Puzzle competition was Mr Michael Box of Reading.

He correctly identified HMS Queen Empress, a paddle steamer hired as a minesweeper in World War I, and again in 1939-45. In the latter half of that conflict she was used as an AA ship before being returned to her commercial owners.

Mr Box receives our prize of £30.

A further £30 is offered for the name of this month's ship - and the title of the novel dedicated to her.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw

to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is June 15. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted.

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envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned. The winner will be announced in our July edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

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Helping Hands



Tons of stamps for dogs

STAMP collecting is something Peter Robinson is very good at – he is thought to have collected more than 400 million over the past few years.

Peter, who was involved in Landing Ships Tank (Control) in the Korean War and is a member of the Royal British Legion and the Korean War Veterans, is now collecting used stamps and phone cards for his 20th guide dog – and each dog represents a ton of stamps and cards.

He spends most of his time sorting the material, getting through a record six tons (and obtaining six dogs) in 1997, which earned him a silver replica of a guide dog.

But Peter also manages to get out and about. Having retired from newspapers ten years ago, he regularly visits Spain and was in Korea for the 40th anniversary of the ceasefire.

Peter is glad to hear from anyone who can help him gather stamps or phone cards – he receives packets of stamps every day. Contact him at "Llamados", 51, Carlton Road, Sale, Cheshire, or telephone 0161 282 1579.

Village fete is all at sea

● Joint forces – LWEM Dent and WEM Jones win the HMS Roebuck fancy dress competition.



A VILLAGE fete at sea was one of the fund-raising stunts which helped survey ship HMS Roebuck raise almost £500 for its affiliated town of Didcot during a charities day.

The event, held while the ship was at anchor off the Isle of Man, included a 20,000m sponsored row which POSA Drew completed in 81 minutes, raising more than £100.

In a series of job swaps, the Commanding Officer, Cdr Robert Stewart, swapped with the leading chef, so while the CO slaved away in the galley his replacement hosted a luncheon party.

The Navigating Officer and Supply Officer swapped with the stewards and were at the beck and call of the new CO.

A village fete was held on the quarter-deck, including clay pigeon shooting, a fortune teller and a fresh fruit machine.

Some were liberally doused with cold water while in the stocks, and the WE department demonstrated brawn and brain by winning the tug o' war and the fancy dress competition.

The day finished with a barbecue and horse racing, allowing the Wrens' mess to show their betting prowess.

The charities day brings the total raised by Roebuck for Didcot to over £720.

In Brief

Loose change mounts up

A COLLECTION of "dib-dob" – loose change left over from runs ashore in foreign ports – netted around £60 for the British Epilepsy Association.

The money was gathered during HMS Hurworth's epic seven-and-a-half month deployment with NATO's Standing Naval Force Channel last year, which saw her cross the Atlantic.

The dib-dob included currency from as far afield as Norway, Portugal, the United States, Canada and Iceland.

The Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel is in refit in Rosyth until the autumn.

Nelson cash helps hospital

A YEAR'S worth of fund-raising by HMS Nelson has resulted in the presentation of a cheque for £4,000 to the Portsmouth Hospital NHS Trust, the establishment's adopted charity for 1998.

The money was specifically targeted at the maternity wing and children's ward of St Mary's Hospital and the Macmillan Nurses.

The cheque was received by Dr Golding on behalf of the hospital.

Nepalese trek for deafblind

A CHARITY which supports deafblind people seeks fund-raisers who would like to trek in Nepal.

Sense is organising the Annapurna Challenge 99, taking groups of 25 trekkers in weekly departures from October 21. Individuals are asked to make a £195 personal contribution and to raise a minimum of £2,000.

More info on 0870 129 0101.

Red noses and cleaner cars

MEDICS and mechanics from HMS Sultan raised £779 for Comic Relief this year.

The Medical Department, led by POMA Craig Waylen, toured the establishment collecting money in fancy dress, while the Air Mechanics section, led by Lt Mike Hickson, opened a car wash for the day.

Retired officer will cycle to Brussels

BRUSSELS by bike is the target for a retired Royal Navy captain.

Capt John Organ recently left the Senior Service after 37 years, and with time on his hands has decided to join the Royal British Legion Bike to Brussels event on June 10-13.

The three-day ride will cover 350kms, with the 100 or so riders spending up to six hours a day in the saddle.

The Royal British Legion cares for serving and ex-Service personnel and their families, providing support and access to residential and convalescent homes, provides visitors, holidays for the disabled, much-needed respite for carers and retraining for those leaving the Services.

Any support for John should be directed to 1, John Aubrey Close, Yatton Keynell, Chippenham, SN14 7EG, telephone 01249 783127.



● CPOs Dave Cox, Craig Hutchinson and Mick Watt present a cheque for more than £700 to the Children's Centre, Hythe, on behalf of colleagues in the WOs and CPOs Mess of HMS Invincible. The money, raised during the carrier's Operation Bolton Gulf deployment of 1997-98, will be used towards the purchase of specialist lighting equipment, stimulating some of the more severely-affected children at the centre, which caters for children with learning difficulties and autism.

Royals put environment support boat back in water



● Back in business – staff of the Ocean Defender and personnel from TRM Poole take the repaired RIB out for a test spin around Poole Quay.

ROYAL Marines at Poole have saved an environmental charity more than £2,000 in labour costs by repairing their support boat.

The crew of environmental vessel Ocean Defender found their RIB had fallen into a poor state of repair because of overuse.

So the personnel of the Landing Craft Wing at Poole offered assistance, and within weeks CPOMEA Bradbeer and L/Cpl Berry had overhauled the craft and its engines.

The RIB is now back on duty at Poole Quay as the charity's initial response craft to help in environmental rescue missions. Ocean Defender, run by the charity Earthkind, arrived in Poole earlier this year to educate the public and schoolchildren about conservation.

The ship's master, Derek Fett, said: "It was great for the Marines to offer help in this way."

"The boat is absolutely essential to us and they've done a fantastic job in mending it. We are very happy."

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OPERATION ALLIED FORCE

Iron Duke within fifteen miles of shore batteries

YUGOSLAV naval forces have been pinned down in Montenegro by a NATO flotilla which includes HMS Iron Duke.

One of the biggest threats to warships in the area is from a surprise attack by fast, heavily armed craft carrying modern anti-ship missiles.

And HMS Iron Duke, which sailed from Portsmouth in January, has been operating as close as 15 nautical miles to potent Serbian shore batteries since arriving in the Adriatic to guard against the possibility.

The ship's Lt Cdr Mark Irwin told *Navy News*: "Since the air campaign started HMS Iron Duke has truly been in the front line."

"The ship has been flying active surface patrols at a high state of readiness and when not flying her Mk 8 Lynx helicopter 'Red Lion' has spent the vast majority of its time fully armed on deck with highly effective and battle-proven Sea Skua air-to-surface missiles loaded."

"It has been co-operating with other units of NATO's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean and flying patrols by day and night to keep up a continuous watch."

The helicopter uses sophisticated thermal imaging and radar to identify any Yugoslav naval forces.

Lt Cdr Irwin said: "This is a vital task to ensure that Milosevic does



not attempt a demonstrative strike against NATO."

Iron Duke has also been guarding high value but less heavily armed units in the area and was on station when the first wave of Tomahawks was launched.

Sailors in the operations room, deep in the heart of the ship, have been monitoring the trace of the cruise missiles on their screens as they seek out their targets inland.

And at night, from the bridge of the ship, lookouts have seen the

● **RIGHT:** A map of the Balkans showing which Royal Navy warships are deployed in the region. Their actual positions have not been shown for obvious reasons.

● **LEFT:** HMS Iron Duke. The ship is on the front line.

red heat of booster motors as missiles are launched from the sea.

Meanwhile, the Ship's Company has kept up defence watches which means everybody on board working six hours on, six hours off, carrying life jackets and wearing white anti-flash gear.

Iron Duke's CO, Cdr Clive Johnstone, said: "The Royal Navy provides the best training in the world and Iron Duke is well prepared. Everybody knows exactly what is required and we are working with a pleasing unity of purpose. While it is a worrying time, we are focused on our role and ready in all respects to do our duty."

After a short maintenance period in Sicily, Iron Duke will return to the Adriatic and is not due back home until the end of July, by which time she will have been away from the UK for nearly seven months.



● **PRAYERS:** Iron Duke hosts an Easter service with fellow NATO sailors. Prayers were said for the people of Kosovo. Picture: Iron Duke

Splendid result for the Tomahawk team



HMS SPLENDID'S firing of the Navy's first operational Tomahawk missile was made possible by a dedicated team from industry and the Submarine Service.

The launch, on day one of NATO's air campaign, followed an intensive development programme and successful trials in San Diego by the Royal Navy Tomahawk Land Attack (TLAM) team last November.

The missile destroyed a small target 400 miles away and the team's achievements, coupled with the submarine's performance in the Adriatic, has earned them the Procurement Executive's 'Project Team of Year' award.

The industry team was led by prime contractor Lockheed Martin, and their TLAM Project Manager Andy Crofts was one of the first to hear of the award.

In a letter announcing the decision, the PE said: "The success of the TLAM project owes a great deal to the hard work and professionalism of you, your staff and all of the UK sub contractors."

Work to adapt two further submarines for Tomahawk missiles is already in hand.



● **ABOVE:** The RN's first live fired Tomahawk missile off the coast of San Diego. The missile destroyed a small target 400 miles away. ● **ABOVE LEFT:** Splendid takes the missile on board.

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OPERATION ALLIED FORCE

Invincible takes the strain - again

WITH A RUSH deployment to the Gulf in January and her latest diversion to the Balkans - HMS Invincible is earning a reputation as HMS Indispensable.

The ship, whose last Gulf deployment was also extended, was due back in Portsmouth in April before she was sent to the coast of Albania.

The Carrier Task Group arrived on station in the Ionian Sea on April 15 after a rapid transit of the Suez Canal and a resupply at Cyprus.

And less than 48 hours later her Sea Harriers were engaged in combat air patrols high over Yugoslavia, boosting the UK contribution to the air campaign by 35 per cent and sending a clear message to Slobodan Milosevic that Britain means business.

Invincible's Ship's Company are the first to admit that morale took a nose-dive when they heard they were not going home as planned.

With over 1,400 people on board the ship and her escort HMS Newcastle, the diversion to the Balkans has had a huge knock-on effect for families at home. Weddings have been postponed, birthdays and anniversaries missed, holidays cancelled and several fathers have yet to see their new-born children.

But within a few days most had accepted the decision and the reason for it, and few have been unmoved by graphic TV pictures reaching the ship showing the plight of Kosovo's refugees.

As Invincible's AEM Mick Rourke said: "There's not a person on board who doesn't want to go home but these people we are helping haven't got homes to go to, so we've got to think of ourselves as lucky."

Report by
Dominic Blake
Pictures
PO Kev Preece,
LA Richard
Mattey and LA
Nathan Dua



● **HARD WORKER:** HMS Invincible, due home in April, remains on active service off Albania.

● **HANDS ON CHECK:** A pilot from 800 NAS (below) makes a visual inspection of his AMRAAM air-to-air missiles before launching a combat air patrol over the Balkans.



Now that they are on station they are determined to make their presence count and the hard work of everyone on board is helping to keep the ship's primary weapon system, her Sea Harriers, in action.

Invincible's CO, Capt James Burnell-Nugent, said: "This is a dream ticket for the Sea Harriers, it's exactly what they're designed for. The Blue Vixen radar and AMRAAM missile system is top of the range - it is the best in the world."

"They are a very good match for a MiG - particularly when flying in pairs - they have a longer range radar, better missiles and better pilots."

One of the most important contributions the aircraft can make is to bad weather operations as Capt Burnell-Nugent explained: "The Sea Harrier's technology is not affected by the weather - they can find their targets even through thick cloud."

"Milosevic does not stop what he is doing just because the weather is bad. The Serbs could use clear air underneath cloud for bombing villages but the Sea Harrier will enable us to keep up the pressure on him."

"If we can help keep his aircraft on the ground we will be making a big contribution to the campaign. Any army that is deprived of its air force is a lot worse off."



● **CHAFF:** AEM Rob Carolan checks the chaff launcher on an 800 Squadron Sea Harrier.

Sea Kings training up

SEA KING crews from the anti-submarine squadron in Invincible are training for the possibility that they will be asked to assist in the refugee crisis.

Lt Cdr Martyn Skeer, CO of the 814, said: "We don't know what our role will be at the moment but we can train for the possibilities."

"We may be called upon to provide humanitarian aid, food, medical supplies or to fly passengers in. If we have to do this we will be working in mountainous areas and will need to practice this before going in operationally."

Meanwhile, airborne early warning squadron 849 NAS are working closely with 800 Squadron's Sea Harriers and are arranging low flying exercises in Italy and training with American aircraft.



● **UNLEASHING THE TIGER:** A Sea King from 814 NAS prepares to take off from HMS Invincible.

Sea Harriers join the battle

● Continued from P1

a real danger.

To protect them, Milosevic's forces have been copying the Iraqi dictator's policy of firing missiles ballistically or switching on radars, which gives their location away, at the last moment and only when targets are within range.

Another pilot from the first mission said: "Milosevic seems to have learned all the lessons that Saddam did a long time ago. He's got more kit and very, very experienced operators, so the surface-to-air threat is pretty massive."

"But it's not a no-win situation. We are really well equipped in terms of self protection - we have defensive electronics, chaff launchers and flares."

"Avoiding the missiles is just as important as the air-to-air threat and we have been training for just this sort of thing since coming back from Christmas leave. Whatever they throw at us - we will be ready for it."

One Royal Air Force pilot has already had a narrow escape over Yugoslavia after his GR7 Harrier bomber was locked on to by a Serb missile system.

His predicament was appreciated by the 800 Squadron pilot who is a veteran of three tours in Bosnia and three in the Gulf, where he had a close shave himself.

"I was locked on to in Iraq, so it would be nothing new. We expect it and the moment it happens, the reaction is instinctive. That's what the training is all about."

Another of 800 Squadron's top priorities is to detect a variety of low-level aircraft which are being used to attack Kosovar Albanians and which pose a threat to NATO troops in Albania and Macedonia.

The pilot said: "These aircraft will hug the ground and in that respect they will be more difficult to detect on radar than the MiGs. But on the flip side, they are easier to engage because they will not necessarily know where we are."

As more damage is done to Yugoslavia's air defences, the Sea Harriers are likely to be called on to fly alongside GR7 Harriers from 1 Squadron RAF which are launching bombing raids from the Italian air base at Gioia Del Colle.

The airman said: "At the moment, we are providing Defensive Counter Air cover which means that if enemy aircraft get airborne the bombers will withdraw and it's our job to go in and shoot the bad guys."

"What we will probably be doing later on is providing Offensive Counter Air, which is what we were doing in the Gulf. That means flying in direct support of RAF GR7s from Gioia, escorting them into theatre and providing fighter sweep."

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All advertisements submitted for entry into the Navy News Penfriend Column are subjected to copy approval.
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HMS Newcastle is the first line of defence



● **BALKANS EXPERT:** Admiral Ian Forbes, Commander of the UK Task Force.

Milosevic is 'embodiment of evil' says Admiral

THE COMMANDER of the UK Task Group off Albania is an expert on the Balkans.

Rear Admiral Ian Forbes worked at the MOD policy centre for Yugoslavia before commanding HMS Invincible while her Harriers engaged the Bosnian Serb army.

His next job was Military Adviser to the High Representative in Sarajevo and after years of studying the region, he is in no doubt about the root of the problem - Slobodan Milosevic.

Admiral Forbes said: "I think that Mr Milosevic is the true embodiment of evil."

"He set the Balkans alight in the early '90s and continues to re-ignite it, and I very much hope that at some stage in the future he will be called to account for his crimes."

WITH OVER 1,000 NATO aircraft now operating in the Balkans HMS Newcastle faces a highly complex task in providing air defence for the carrier group.

The Type 42 destroyer is maintaining a defensive umbrella around HMS Invincible in the Ionian Sea, keeping her safe while she punches her Harriers into Albania and beyond.

But with such a huge range of aircraft, from fixed wing fast jets, helicopters and even commercial traffic operating in such a small area, the task can be a daunting one.

HMS Newcastle's CO, Cdr Steve Kenny, said: "Newcastle's role is to ensure that anything that leaves the skies of Yugoslavia and ventures out over the sea is quickly identified, challenged and if necessary intercepted."

"It is a very difficult and complex air environment. There are literally hundreds of aircraft operating from Italy into the South and East."

Although an air attack is thought to be unlikely, the ship's Sea Dart missile system is constantly on line.

Cdr Kenny said: "Yugoslavia has a very varied air force from the latest MiGs to the less capable Super Galebs but they are primarily a land based air force and rarely venture out over the sea."

"But you can never count out the maverick, the individual within their armed forces who feels that their government is not doing enough, and takes it on themselves to do more."

"Whilst not discounting the threat, we are well placed to deal with it should it come, with Sea Dart, which has proven itself in the Falklands and the Gulf, and in test firings before we deployed on Operation Bolton."

As well as protecting the group from attack, Newcastle plays a role in identifying and tracking air traffic to help avoid the nightmare scenario of a 'blue on blue' where friendly aircraft are attacked. Cdr Kenny said: "There are weekly meetings to ensure deconfliction of aircraft space into and out of



● **HMS Newcastle's CO:** Cdr Steve Kenny

Yugoslavia which is vital to avoid this 'blue on blue' scenario, which thank goodness, has not materialised to date, but I don't think it will because we are dealing with professional people."

"The real problem here is the weather. Two days ago we had a 45mph wind, cloud right down to the bottom and strong rain squalls and in that, with visibility markedly reduced, were rotary wing aircraft, military aircraft and civil aircraft."

"That is where I think the danger lies, when the weather comes in and visibility reduces, the possibility of a 'blue on blue' or a misunderstanding because of the lack of ability to see each other before it's too late."

Mammoth task for the RFA

SHIPS of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary have been heavily engaged in the task of transporting troops to the Balkans.

While RFAs Fort Austin and Bayleaf are keeping the carrier task group supplied with fuel and stores in the Ionian Sea, RFAs Sea Crusader and Sea Centurion have been ferrying British soldiers, tanks, vehicles and equipment from Marchwood Military Port and Emden in Germany.

The heavy lift ships, which work for the Joint Rapid Deployment Force, were due to arrive in Greece as Navy News went to press, followed by the Landing Ship Logistics RFA Sir Geraint, the latest RFA to set sail from Marchwood near Southampton. For a full report, watch out for the next issue.

Meanwhile, RFA Fort Grange is continuing to keep British troops serving in the Stabilisation Force in Bosnia supplied from the port of Split.

● **COMBAT AIR PATROL:** A Sea Harrier from 800 Naval Air Squadron launches a combat air patrol from the deck of HMS Invincible as HMS Newcastle stands by. The Type 42 destroyer plays a vital role in protecting all the ships of the carrier task group, which includes RFAs Fort Austin and RFA Bayleaf.

● **OPERATIONS ROOM:** OM2 Nick Stevens (below) tracking aircraft on the ship's 996 radar. With more than 1,000 aircraft now operating in the area, putting together the maritime air picture is a complex and demanding task.



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COMMODORE Leandro Gurina, who had been a young officer in the destroyer Hercules during the Falklands conflict, was among the veterans who met the Prince of Wales during his three-day visit to Argentina.

Retired Surg Capt Rick Jolly, who commanded the field hospital at Ajax Bay, San Carlos, was the only British veteran present at a wreath laying ceremony at the Malvinas monument in Buenos Aires.

Later the Prince flew from Uruguay to visit the Falklands where he attended ceremonies at Goose Green, San Carlos, Fox Bay and Fitzroy, casting a wreath into San Carlos Water in memory of HMS Antelope and HMS Ardent.

A planned visit to HMS Dumbarton Castle had to be cancelled – but the Prince had the chance to meet members of her ship's company when he visited the Tristar hangar display at Mount Pleasant airport before catching his flight back to the UK.

The Falklands patrol ship had earlier taken part in Exercise Purple Strike, a joint exercise with the RAF and the Falkland Islands Resident Infantry Company, one of her roles being to transport RIC members to areas difficult to access by road.

In this, 85 members of C Company, 1st Royal Gurkha Regiment, were embarked four at a time by Searider in San Carlos Water. Once on board, they were fed and led to quiet areas of the ship for some sleep before being

taken across Falkland Sound to disembark at Port Howard, none of them getting their feet wet in the process – an important consideration for an infantryman, Lt Cdr Tuppen observed.

The exercise culminated with a Company live firing attack – which owing to certain flying limitations could not have been managed without the Dumbarton Castle's involvement.

Said Lt Cdr Tuppen: "This was an excellent piece of 'jointery' which ably demonstrates some of the unique opportunities available in the Falklands. It was a very good whole ship manpower co-ordination evolution and everybody enjoyed the interaction between the Army and ourselves."

The Prince of Wales had a taste of another side of Naval training when he made an informal visit to BRNC Dartmouth – currently run by his onetime First Lieutenant in HMS Bronington, Commodore Roy Clare.

First stop was the Bridge Trainer to meet staff and Young Officers and then to Fisher Hall, where he unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the new indoor drill shed.

The Prince also visited the training ship Hindostan before making the round of the college's classrooms and laboratories.



● Above left: The Prince of Wales meets S/Lt Mohammed Magrey, one of the Young Officers on board the Hindostan at Dartmouth. Chief River Instructor CPO Dave Logan, who has lately received the MBE from the Queen, looks on.

Above right: with (left to right) Lt Dave Swigciski, Lt Cdr Russ Tuppin (the ship's CO), Lt Emma Perry, PO Ollie Burton and CPO Ian Gorman of HMS Dumbarton Castle at Mount Pleasant airport.



KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

SECOND Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Brigstocke signs the new Royal Navy and Royal Marines Families Association charter with the Association's Chairman Mrs Maxine James.

Said Admiral Brigstocke: "I congratulate Mrs James and Mrs Lee Fletcher, as the founder members, on this significant step forward."

"Caring for our people is one of my primary tasks. The Association will play an important part in this role by helping to foster good two-way communications and contact between the Naval Service and its families and by providing a recognised focus and

independent source of information.

"I also fully support the Association's role of helping to represent the views of Naval Service families on matters affecting Service life and look forward to seeing their contribution to the Ministerially-led 'Service Families Task Force'."

"This is already achieving significant progress in making other Government departments aware of the problems of Service families, particularly regarding schools admission policies, job seekers allowance and the need to transfer special needs assessments, child minding registration and NHS treatment on relocation."

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Behind the ba

THE long, red-brick building has a surprisingly light and airy feel for a purpose-built prison, but there is no mistaking the standard design – rows of identical doors, one set on the ground floor, two above around galleries.

Not the first place you would think of putting a prestigious music school – but then the Royal Marines Band Service is a deceptive group of people.

And it is here in the former detention quarters – DQs – in HMS Nelson that the multi-talent-

ed, disciplined bandmen and women of the future are put through their exacting paces.

The School returned to Portsmouth from Deal in 1996, and the move is already starting to pay dividends for both the Band Service and the individuals within it.

For a link with the local university has led to the school's activities being academically codified, opening the way for a series of widely-recognised qualifications – including degrees – to be conferred on military musicians.

Few people see the full range of an RM musician's talents.

There are those who love the spectacle of the marching band,

The old Royal Navy Detention Quarters in HMS Nelson now houses the Royal Marines School of Music – and its return to Portsmouth is paying dividends, as MIKE GRAY reports.

where the musicians, in blue uniforms and trademark white helmets, perform like clockwork

behind the drum major while playing faultlessly on their instruments.

Others may see them performing as an orchestra, or maybe as a dance band at a formal function.

Still others may prefer the swing of the big band, or maybe a looser jazz performance, or even a rock band. Same people – different settings. And often different instruments, too.

Staffing requirements, driven by the need for a band to instantly turn into an orchestra, means that musicians must be versatile – double-handing is the norm, and others may play three instruments.

The musician marching with the euphonium will also be an accomplished cellist as well, a clarinetist will also play violin, and the tuba player will also play string bass and electric bass for a dance band.

Similarly, pianists will also be expected to play cornet and clarinet.

"We have to have the balance to be able to convert a wind band to an orchestra," said Sgt Neil Silvester, RMSM secretary.

"We have to have set combinations. You might have six clarinets in the wind band, but you only need two in the orchestra, so the other four would play violin, for example."

High standards apply from the very beginning – the audition process tests not just musical ability but stamina and character as well.

The new arrival at the RMSM has a training schedule of two years eight months – a year less in the Buglers Branch – and much of that time will be spent perfecting their musical talent.

But there is the other side of military life to learn as well, and for the first 15 weeks of the initial training phase there is precious little music to be played.

Drill has to be learned (for discipline, as well as to develop the particular skills required to march an intricate pattern while performing in a ceremonial band), a good level of fitness has to be maintained (apart from strenuous infantry training, RM bands have no roadies – the performers get to lug all the equipment as well as play it), and first-aid courses prepare personnel for their wartime duties in field hospitals, hospital ships or casualty clearing centres.

After this initial burst of activity things settle down. Much of their time is spent in their individual 'practice rooms' – the cells of the old DQs, though now there are handles on the inside as well as the outside.

Here they have two or three formal one-to-one sessions each week with visiting professors of music, often leading musicians with top London orchestras.

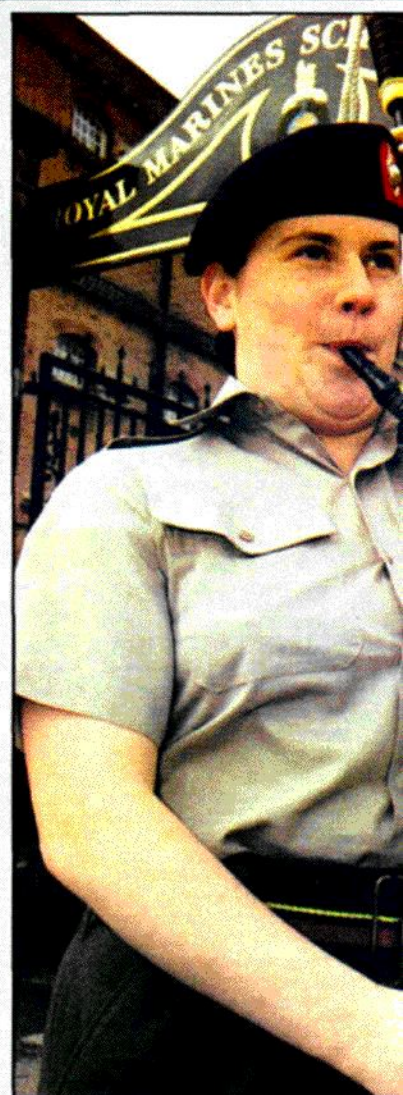
Permanently on hand are Band Service NCO instructors – specialists in particular instruments who can help put the professorial theory into practice.

There are also classes in aural training, elements of music, orchestra instrumental, choir and band practice, with full orchestral practice and dance band work coming in later.

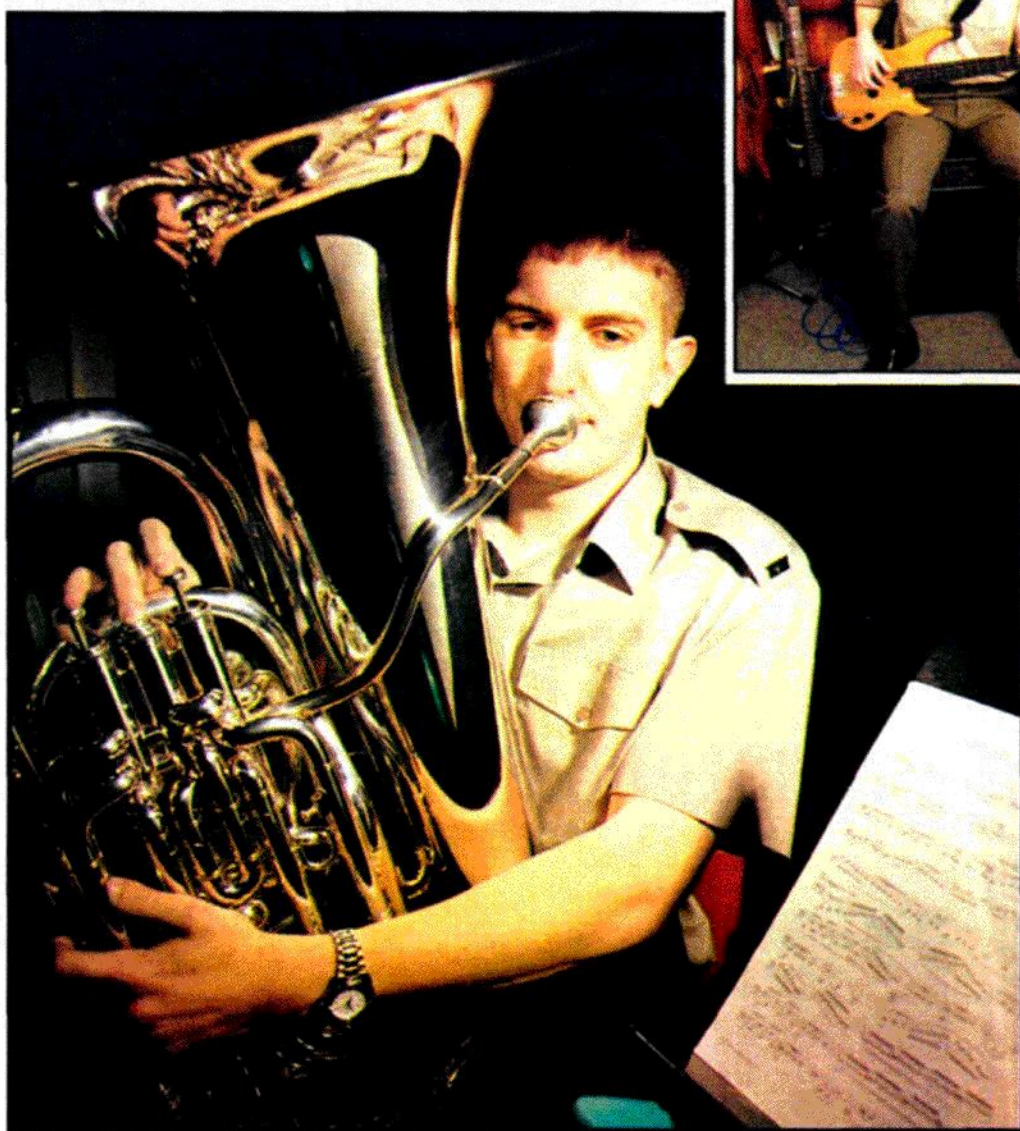
The idea of creating a formal qualification arose when the University of Portsmouth's Director of Music, Dr William McVicker, visited the school shortly after it opened.

He was so impressed – the school has access to the HQ Band Service's fine collection of instruments, repair shop and extensive music library, and has numerous practice and performance facilities – that he broached the subject of formal links.

Joint performances between civilian and military students were just the start, and two years ago the school's tuition had been developed into a formal course structure



● Top piper – Musician Julie Martin, a pipe band for the past two years.



● Musical study – Musician Andy Wighton playing the tuba and (inset) on electric bass, with string basses and other bass guitars behind him.

Pictures by LA(PHOT) Mark Hipkin (FPU).

Students scoop awards

THE QUALITY of the students at the RMSM can be gauged from two award-winners currently learning their trade.

Musician Julie Martin (20), who joined in September, has been learning bassoon and cello.

But she is also a world champion on the bagpipes – she was a member of the Dr Wright Memorial Pipe Band which won the World Pipe Band championships in Glasgow in 1997 and 1998.

"I'm really enjoying it here, though it is hard work," said Julie.

"I'm playing two new instruments from scratch, but it's going well – I seem to be doing OK so far."

"I always wanted to do music at the RMSM – it seemed to be just what I wanted."

"I practise for about six hours a day on my official instruments, and then I do a bit extra on my bagpipes."

"Although I am not officially a piper – I do it in my own time – hopefully I will get a chance to use it in the Royal Marines."

Julie will be looking for a world title hat-trick in August, when she will also be competing as a solo piper.

Fellow student Ann Jonassen (19) has also created a track record for herself at an early stage, winning the top prize Silver Medal at this

year's Cassell Prize competition.

Ann, a flautist who also plays saxophone, said: "I am really pleased to have won, because it's a prestigious competition within the Band Service."

"Hopefully it will be a stepping stone to better things, professionally and within the Royal Marines."

Ann has been at the school for about a year and a half, but had an open mind about what life would be like in the Royal Marines.

"I wasn't sure what to expect when I came here, but I really like the way the practice time is divided up, and the fact that so much time is spent on different combinations."

"I never wanted to go to study music at university. I wanted to put music into practice, rather than write essays, and I always liked military music, so this was perfect."

"I always wanted to see the world as well – so, fingers crossed!"

Musician Andy Wighton (23) is one of the older hands, having joined in 1996.

"It's been brilliant," said Andy, who plays tuba, string bass and bass guitar.

"Top-class teachers come in and teach you; it really inspires you to play."

"And going out to play for the public, which is what we joined to do, gives you a good feeling, because people really appreciate it."



● Quiet practice – Musician Alison Brooke-Coaker on the piano in a practice room, one of the old cells of the Detention Quarters.

offering a range of awards from Certificate in Higher Education to Masters and beyond.

There are currently 41 students at the school, who will gradually feed through to the five bands of the RM Band Service – based at Portsmouth, CTCRM in Lympstone, BRNC Dartmouth, HMS Raleigh in Cornwall and Scotland – whose strength is around 350 men and women.

There are roughly equal numbers of males and females, a ratio steadily built up since the service was opened to women six years ago.

Although one of the most prestigious opportunities has now gone – a bandsman or woman in the Royal Yacht would have expected to play for heads of state and royalty, as well as taking part in high-profile ceremonies around the world – there are still plenty of perks to the job.

Mess dinners, Wembley cup finals, Beating Retreat, herald trumpet fanfares and media work are all regulars on the RM band Service schedule, and there is often scope – if they can find the time –

Audition

ALTHOUGH the audition is a daunting process, staff at the Marines School of Music are looking for potential, rather than perfection.

A 40-minute aural test may involve identifying down pitches, a four-bar melody and describing six triads as major or minor. Candidates, aged between 16 and 21, will be put through a five-part gymkhana consisting of log jumps, trunk curls, inclined pull-ups and a 300-yard run.

Further physical exertion follows in the shape of a 1.5 mile timed run.

There will be a dental inspection. The formation of teeth and mouth will help determine

rs



member of the world champion

to pursue a musical career outside the requirements of the Band Service.

But the School has a wider remit than just newcomers.

Musicians return to Nelson for higher training to take a leading role in the Band Service.

In order to win promotion, musical skills must be complemented by leadership qualities, and the successful musicians go on to the positions of Band Corporal and Band Sergeant.

A further intensive course studying conducting, aural, orchestration, arranging, harmony and composition, counterpoint, among other subjects, opens the way to Bandmaster – and the possibility of a commission, as all officers in the Band Service are promoted from the ranks to maintain the crucial balance of musical ability and leadership.

● **Gallery gathering** – students on the top floor of the old Royal Navy Detention Quarters, now converted into 74 single and double practice rooms.

Picture: PO(PHOT) Dave Coombs (DNR).



ns test potential – and fitness

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An audition on the candidate's instrument will be held, but that may be supplemented by trials on other instruments.

A potential band member may try up to five different ones during an afternoon, some of which he or she has never played before.

Again, the trained eye and ear of the professor and instructor will judge the potential of the candidate.

An individual interview rounds off the process, when senior members of staff fill in some of the background details about each candidate, and they in turn are questioned about the Band Service.

During the audition process there is also a chance for potential recruits to see the

types of weapons they will be expected to handle in the Royal Marines, and an introductory film and brief are presented to give a complete picture.

All being well, a successful candidate will be told by letter that they have been accepted, both in terms of musical ability and fitness to join the Royal Marines, and whether they will be expected to learn new instruments.

Auditions are held three times a year for one entry in September, and there are normally three budding musicians chasing each place at the school.

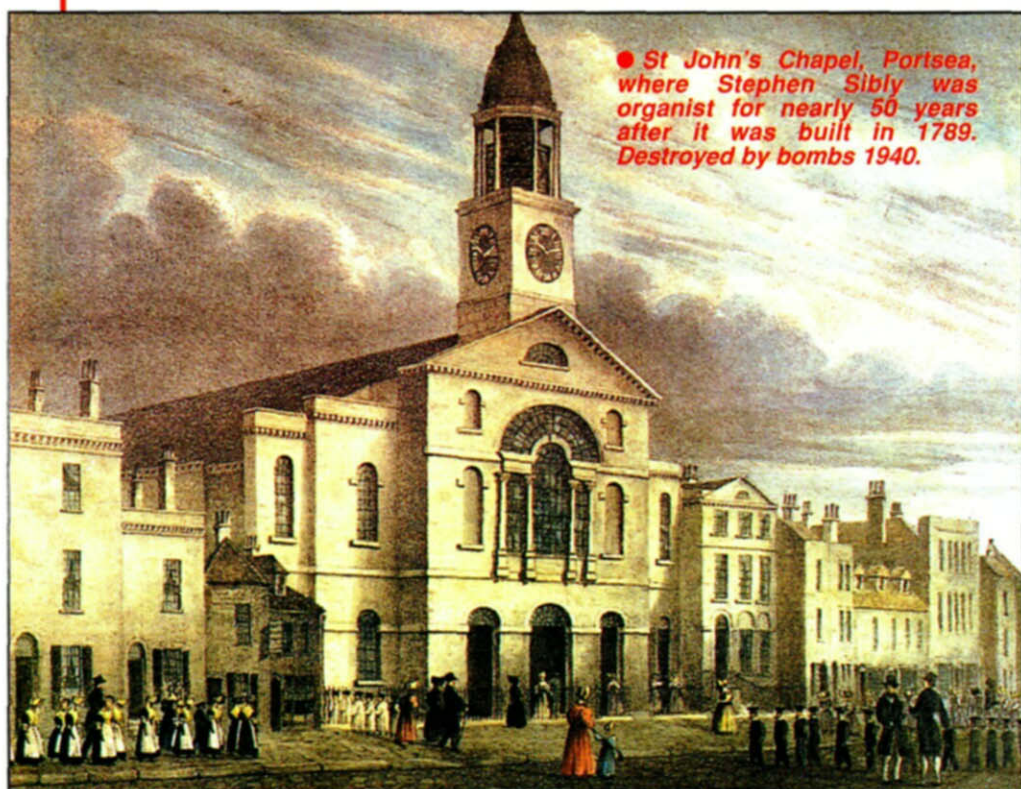
This year there is a larger entry than normal – the school is seeking 27 musicians and four buglers.



● **On the beat** – Cpl Chris Boulton leads a drum session.



How the Vicar and Sibly failed to make music ...



● St John's Chapel, Portsea, where Stephen Sibly was organist for nearly 50 years after it was built in 1789. Destroyed by bombs 1940.

LOSS of life through battle, illness or severe injury coupled with long absences abroad meant Naval families in Nelson's day often became destitute.

Special concerts were given in many towns to raise funds for them – and Music in Portsmouth (1789-1842), latest in the excellent Portsmouth Papers series, reveals that a wealth of musical talent was available on Portsea Island for the purpose.

Working from reports and advertisements in the local press, Frank Warren and Irwen Cockman have discovered the unsung hero behind the organisation of many of them – one Stephen Sibly, of Salisbury, who was appointed organist at St John's Chapel in 1789 and also at St Thomas's, Portsmouth in 1795 – posts he held for nearly 50 years.

Visits of artists of the calibre of Paganini, Strauss, Liszt and Haydn show how highly Portsmouth rated in the itinerary of top-class performers of the day and Sibly was in large measure responsible for making musical life in the town as lively as that in any outside London.

The Austrian Joseph Haydn was by far the most popular of contemporary composers featured in the programmes. In 1794 he visited Portsmouth and found the newspapers full of graphic stories of ruined French ships being towed into the harbour.

King George III had come to view the dead and wounded. Haydn would have liked to witness this for himself and wrote in his journal:

"But I could not go there (the dockyard) because I am a foreigner."

By 1840 Sibly was nearly blind and his son Edward deputised as organist at St Thomas's. The Vicar, the Rev J. P. McGhie, took a dislike to him and asked the Churchwardens to appoint another deputy and call on Sibly Snr to resign – which would, ironically, have reduced the man who had done so much for the poor to beggary himself.

Sibly took legal advice and said the Parishoners alone had a right to make such a demand – and it seems they stood by the old man, for when he died two years later he was still in possession of the organ key.

It was not Edward's inability as an organist that was the cause of the trouble, apparently. An account found in a volume of newspaper cuttings is quoted: "The Organ had been some time played by Edward Sibly for his father. Parson McGhie urged this man to marry a woman with whom he was supposed to cohabit, lest the church should be scandalized. He complied solely at the Parson's instigation, and commenced a life of reformation. But, no, this was not enough. McGhie, whose ear, I understand is as dull as a deal board, has taken a fancy that he is a great judge of music. Sibly has been obliged to lower the key of many of the tunes, to suit the cracked voices of a parcel of squalling boys, and this every musician knows will nine times out of ten entirely destroy their melody."

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Coles' black night off Cap Finisterre

CAPT Cowper Phipps Coles was the inventor of the British turntable turret system of mounting guns in warships. He was also the designer of HMS Captain, the first sea-going turret warship built to provide all-round firepower.

The Captain was therefore the first in the line of innovative designs that reached a peak before

World War II. Unfortunately, she capsized and sank in a gale off Finisterre on the night of September 6/7 1870, just four months after being commissioned. There were only 18 survivors out of 500.

In the lengthy controversy that followed there was a row between Coles and the Admiralty Constructor, Edward Reed, who had claimed the design had been potentially dangerous.

He had warned when examining the original plans: "The hull appears to me to be somewhat heavily designed in places, and the weight allowed for barely sufficient, and if any suggestions of mine led to increased weight occasion might thus be afforded for a transfer to this department of a

responsibility which does not belong to it, in the event of the ship proving too deeply immersed."

When she was complete and ready for sea it was estimated she would exceed her designed weight by 427 tons and therefore float at least 13 ins deeper than planned.

Coles had originally estimated a crew of 400 men: the Admiralty reckoned 500. Reed had worked out that the extra complement would increase the weight carried by 50 tons, sinking the ship a further inch or two.

Arthur Hawkey notes in his study of the disaster **Black Night off Finisterre** (Airlife £19.95) that no evidence survived of the state of the Captain's trim when she foundered – but that the lee deck had been observed to be perma-



● Capt Cowper Phipps Coles

nently awash during the afternoon. Capt Hugh Burgoyne VC, who died with his ship and Coles both had practical sailing experience in the ship which had seemed to deny all misgivings about sails and low freeboard – and had given them a dangerous confidence in her.

The court martial concluded, in effect, that they did not have the doom-laden scientific evidence against her and thought, notwithstanding all the Jeremiahs, that she was perfectly seaworthy.

So-o-o-o 20th century, Mel!

MAKE it again, Sam. Scarcely a week goes by without a bit of cinematic recycling in the form of a sequel or a remake. The big part of Mel Gibson's output has been one or the other, and after *Ransom*, which was a re-working of a Glenn Ford thriller from 1955, he comes up with *Payback*, which turns out to be a new version of the old Lee Marvin classic *Point Blank*. "No more Mr Nice Guy" the film's poster warns us, and it's true – Mel may still be the hero, but now he's ruthless with it. He plays a robber, double-crossed and left for dead in the aftermath of a heist.

a couple of crooked cops and the Mafia, with whom his quarry is now associated.

But no more Mr Nice Guy: Mel rampages through the lot of them, terrorising, beating, blowing up and at one point even vaulting a subway barrier to avoid paying his train fare. Here's a preview of some evening, not too many years in the future, when a couple of people are watching a TV re-run of this picture. "Oh boy," says one of them condescendingly, "this is so-o-o-o 20th century..."

Sociological note 1: according to this, the Mafia is now run by men with names like Fairfax and Carter. Mamma mia! What on earth can have happened to Don Corleone, to Three Fingers DeAngelo and Willie 'The Breast' Barboza?

The poster for *Plunkett & Macleane* also aims to sell the movie on the basis of its heroes' lack of social graces: "They rob the

rich. That's it." P & M are highwaymen, the Butch and Sundance of Hounslow Heath, and the movie is an energetic rebuttal of the proposition that crime does not pay.

Like the Mel Gibson picture, it's the work of people who have never been mugged. What with its electric rock soundtrack, its flintlock pistols with the fire-power of a Magnum and its fashion model heroine, it's so-o-o-o 1999, though it must be said that Robert Carlyle and Jonny Lee Miller make for more engaging company than sullen old Mel Gibson in *Payback*.

Sociological note 2: in *A Night at the Roxbury*, a comedy about two teenage dolts and their adventures on the club scene, there occurs the response to some irrational proposal or other, "Now don't go mad-cowing me, man." Is this the first use of the term as a verb?

ScreenScene – by Bob Baker

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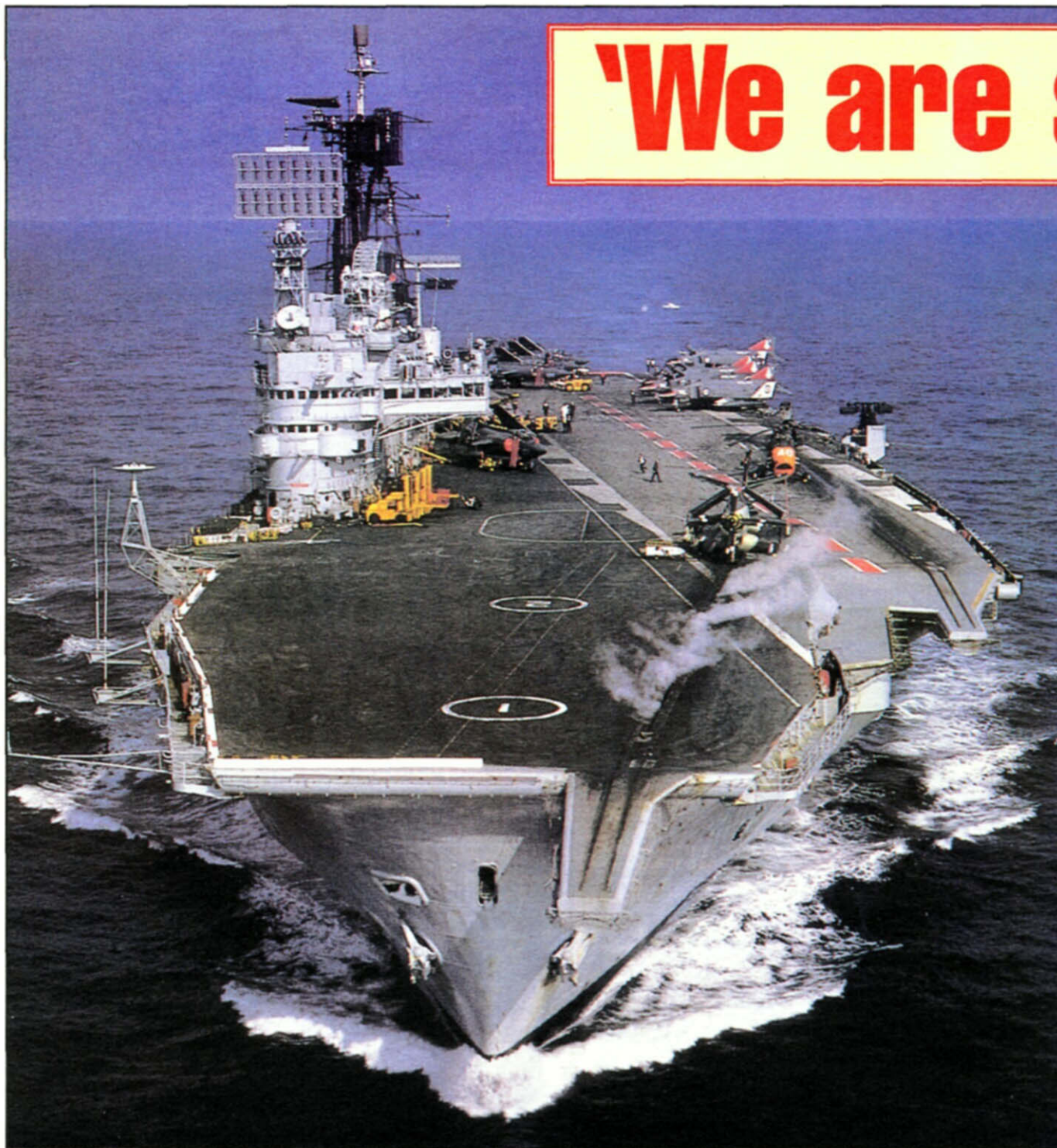
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At Your Leisure



'We are sailing ...'



B RITAIN'S Greatest Warship is the subtitle to Richard Johnstone-Bryden's sumptuous history of HMS Ark Royal IV (Sutton £20).

Plenty of people will argue with that – but she was undoubtedly the most famous RN ship of the post-war era, thanks in large measure to her starring role in the ground-breaking BBC TV documentary series *Sailor* in 1976.

This front cover picture shows her in her final commission (1976-78) – her first began in 1955 – when *Sailor* had made her a national star and Rod Stewart's *Sailing* a new anthem of the sea.

She played a crucial role in the development of RN fixed-wing aviation and pioneered the concept of carrier-borne VSTOL aircraft while carrying out extensive service in a period that saw significant changes in the way seapower was used to project British influence worldwide. The Navy has certainly had no finer ambassador.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Michael Pollock, who took command at three weeks' notice early in 1963, provides the foreword: "The last time I had served in an aircraft carrier was as a midshipman in HMS Furious in 1934 when the aircraft were Blackburn Baffins, Hawker Ospreys and Fairey 3Fs, no sights, no catapults, no radar, no voice radio! I had a lot to learn, very quickly. I found ... a ship's company totally dedicated to keeping the squadrons operational at whatever personal cost in spite of the operating conditions for which the ship had not been designed, the intensity of operations, the age of the machinery and the endemic shortage of aircraft spares which doubled the load on the maintenance department."

His remarks typify the 'can do' spirit that imbues the ships that carry this proud name: "In some totally inexplicable way, in the Royal Navy the ethos becomes linked to the name of the ship and transfers to the next ... May the fifth Ark Royal carry that lustre forward to successive generations for as long as it remains necessary for aircraft to operate from ships at sea."

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New shine to Sheffs' story

THE ORIGINAL HMS Sheffield, a Southampton-class cruiser launched in 1937, distinguished herself in some of the most important battles of World War II and enjoyed a career that spanned 30 years.

The second Sheffield was not so lucky. The Type 42 destroyer that entered service in 1975 was to be the first RN vessel sunk in action since 1945 – on May 4, 1982, off the Falklands.

Since 1990 the first ship to take the name, a Batch 2 Type 22 frigate, has revisited many sites of her predecessors' battles and was at the end of last year West Indies Guardship – another role enjoyed by the first Sheffield – taking part in relief operations in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

Aided by a request in *Navy News*, Sheffield author Alistair Lofthouse has produced a lively history of the three ships, *Shiny Sheff*, available at £8.95 from ALD Design and Print, 279 Sharrow Vale Rd, Sheffield S11 8ZF.

The unsinkable Creighton & Co

OF THE 25 ships in convoy HG73 between Britain and Gibraltar in September 1941 nine were sunk by U-boats. One of these was that of the the convoy commander, Commodore Kenelm Creighton.

The *Avoceta*, a 3,000-ton cargo liner, went down just four minutes after she was hit, taking 43 of the crew, four gunners and 76 of her 128 passengers, among them many children.

Creighton was dragged down with her, entangled in the rigging of the foremast, and was close to drowning when his lifebelt and an escaping bubble of air blew him to the surface, 50 yards from a crowded raft, stone deaf but still able to swim.

He hung on to the raft for three hours with the temperature down to 42 degrees, shivering and dizzy. One by one, the occupants of the raft, dazed and choking on fuel oil, slid off and disappeared.

As the cold bit into him, Creighton gave up hope for the second time – but then the corvette *Periwinkle* appeared out of the darkness and he was hauled up the scrambling nets.

Still deaf and badly shaken, he called upon his vice-commander to take over command as the slaugh-

ter continued over the next two nights.

When he got ashore in Liverpool, in the course of a single day he was treated to a dinner by the Operational Intelligence Centre, told by the doctor that nothing could be done about his deafness, attended a Court of Inquiry and caught the train home – where he slept for a solid 36 hours.

His hearing returned in a week and a month later he was back at sea again.

A remarkable story, even by World War II survival story standards. What makes it all the more remarkable is that Creighton was just a few months short of his 60th birthday.

Fighting Commodores (Leo Cooper £19.95) is the long-overdue history of the men to whom fell the vital task of seeing that merchant ships reached their destinations at a time when lack of supplies brought Britain closest to defeat.

And, like Creighton, they were mostly senior retired Naval



● **SURVIVOR: Rear Admiral Sir Kenelm Creighton**

Officers who volunteered to return to duty.

Alan Burn – who as Capt "Johnnie" Walker's gunnery officer in HMS *Starling* was twice Mentioned in Despatches – has produced a worthy companion to *Fighting Captain*, his biography of Capt Walker published in 1993.

Victims of Yangtze Incident are remembered as survivors recall days of impasse

● Fifty years on – Admiral Zhao Guojun, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Navy of the People's Liberation Army, and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Michael Boyce contemplate the waters of the Yangtze after dropping a wreath from the deck of Type 22 frigate HMS Boxer in memory of those killed during the Yangtze Incident.



Sailors worked to maintain hope

WHEN Communist shells slammed into the bridge of HMS Amethyst as she made her way up the Yangtze River, there seemed more chance of her becoming a curious historical footnote than a stirring example of Naval heroism.

The frigate, with her Commanding Officer fatally wounded, other senior officers wounded and chaos all around, ran aground within range of the Communist guns.

For Stewart Hett, then a lieutenant, it was his first taste of hostile fire.

"I do not remember being particularly frightened; this came later – I was too busy passing orders to the guns," said Lt Cdr Hett (retd).

"As I passed the bridge there was a total shambles, with dead and wounded everywhere."

By this time the ship had run aground, and the forward mountings could not be trained on their attackers.

"As the ship sat aground and unable to return the fire I felt very vulnerable and frightened."

"There was much to be done to repair the damage and make the ship seaworthy, to help the wounded, to run emergency power supplies, to restore electricity to areas cut off by the damage, to rig jury aerials so that we could communicate with the outside world."

Rescue attempts by HM ships Consort, London and Black Swan, came to nothing, and an RAF Sunderland flying boat succeeded in landing a doctor – but had to take off under fire with an officer still on board.

The ship had managed to pull free from her hazardous position, and anchored upstream.

Nationalist Chinese sampans came alongside the ship to evacuate the wounded, but injured First Lieutenant Geoffrey Weston elected to remain on board, in command.

"The next morning we had to start

preparing the dead for burial," said Lt Cdr Hett.

"This was a job that I had no training for, but fortunately some of the older ratings were able to supervise this difficult and disturbing task."

"A special issue of rum was made because of the stressful job."

At this point another of the cast of heroes makes an unusual appearance.

"In the afternoon a landing craft approached," he said.

"I was on the bridge, and any approaching boat could be hostile and herald an attempt to seize the ship."

"Eventually I realised the man standing in the boat waving was an RN officer. He was the assistant RN attache from Nanking, Lt Cdr John Kerans."

Kerans took command, and his first task was to conduct the burial service.

"We paid all due respect to all our casualties, though we did not fire a volley as each body was committed to the river – this might have provoked more shelling from the shore batteries."

The following night brought a pyrotechnic display of shells and tracers as the Communists crossed the river. Many corpses were spotted floating downriver.

Tuesday April 26 brought the first contact with the Communists, shouts from the banks indicating that the Captain should go ashore.

The ship could not afford to lose another officer, so a petty officer went ashore dressed as an officer, causing much ribbing amongst shipmates.

Survivor haunted by sight of blond corpse

JOE BOWDEN was a 17-year-old Boy Signaller in the cruiser HMS London during the Incident, and said that although memories become blurred, some images of the time are still as clear as ever.

"A short while after anchoring at the mouth of the Yangtze, HMS Consort tied up alongside our port side," said Joe.

"She had been badly damaged in her attempt to rescue Amethyst."

"I was on watch on the flag deck, and can vividly remember looking down on Consort and seeing the bodies of those killed laid out in neat rows on her fo'c'stle in makeshift shrouds."

"As I gazed down on the sombre scene, one of the wounded was carried over the gangway from Consort to London."

"I noticed that it was a young lad and that he had quite long blond, almost

flaxen hair. A short while later I saw a stretcher being taken on board Consort, this time with an obviously dead body on board."

"As the stretcher party manoeuvred their burden over the gangway a stiff breeze blew the cover off the corpse's face, and I noticed that it was the blond-haired lad."

"This incident I will never forget. Some mother's son 'killed in action' four years after the end of World War II."

"It was an eerie time on board that night; each person with his own thoughts about what might happen when daylight dawned and it would be our turn to face the guns."

When their turn came, it proved every bit as grim as they had feared.

At first there was a sense of expectancy.

LWTR Pip Perring, in

HMS London made notes: "Our speed is about 30 knots. The stern is under water. The portholes in the Admiral's office are completely under most of the time – some speeding!"

"Ship shaking and rolling like express train."

Joe Bowden takes up the story: "We felt the ship shudder as she gained momentum and then we heard the first loud clang – a hard metallic sound as the first shell from the shore batteries tore into our starboard side."

"Simultaneously our guns opened fire. From then on the din and confusion was non-stop; soon the ship was full of cordite fumes and smoke."

"Looking back on it now we were on a hopeless task. We had no room to take evasive action, we just steamed relentlessly on with guns blazing while the Communist guns hammered hell out of us."

Simon tackled rats on hot, clammy ship

MR G. WRIGHT was an ordinary seaman in HMS Amethyst during the Incident, and celebrated his 20th birthday the week after the ship was attacked.

"Conditions on board after we had buried the dead at sea were very unpleasant – cleaning the decks to try to clear the debris and blood away and try to make the ship habitable again."

"The heat at times was unbearable – hot and clammy, and the rats didn't help."

"It was a good job we had Simon the cat – we would have been overrun without him."

"The only contact we had with the

locals was when they came aboard to bring fresh vegetables which, I might add, were very expensive."

"The ship's company were kept busy cleaning the ship and other duties."

Mr Wright recalls morale as being generally good – but it suffered as negotiations for the ship's safe passage dragged on into weeks and months.

"The crew were despondent at times, but generally the mood of the crew was very good."

"After Lt Cdr Kerans had been ashore a number of times, to get a safe passage down the river, the situation seemed hopeless."

Pipes to mend and holes to plug

LEN WILLIAMS was an ERA in HMS Amethyst's engine room, and his account illustrates the efforts which went into keeping the ship in good enough condition to escape.

When the ship first ran aground under attack, attempts were made to get her straight off.

"During the night we pumped about five tons of fuel overboard – one of the measures to lighten the ship to help get her refloated – running the engines full astern (180rpm) continually for the rest of the night and rocking her in unison, eventually moving her off and steaming up the river away from the area where the Communists were about to cross, and dropped anchor."

"Many areas were flooded, some we could shut off. All the shell holes – many near the waterline – were packed with bedding, hammocks, cushions, socks and whatever came to hand."

"Many pipes were damaged, some in vital areas. The list seemed endless."

"Over the next 100 days we were kept very busy to get what we could in working order."

Len, an ex-Japanese POW, was used to the privations of enforced captivity.

"It was boiling hot by day and freezing cold at night. We recorded 130F in the boiler room and 120F elsewhere."

"Fuel was getting short so we could only run the engines every other day for 12 hours – the only time we had fans going and fridges and making our drinking water and pumping out bilges."

"With no electricity on the ship it was dark at night and our worry was getting run down by passing boats."

"Later on we had to go without for three days instead of two."

In July, with fuel running very low, negotiations resulted in supplies being brought from Nanking – 54 tons of furnace fuel, packed into 2,294 drums.

This had to be manhandled across the sloping deck and the oil poured into small holes to the tanks."

It was hard work, but it meant power for 12 hours a day – and the chance to make a break for the open sea."

At the end of July the ship even had to batten down the hatches for bad weather – a typhoon warning meant a second anchor and steam up, but the storm passed without incident."



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Picture courtesy the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals

Cover marks anniversary

THE RN Philatelic Society has marked the 50th anniversary of the Yangtze Incident with a first day cover.

The cover, featuring a set of picture postcards (including Simon the cat, featured

above), a text sheet and a cover with the Four Ships and their crests, can be obtained from the RNPO at 19, College Road, HM Naval base, Portsmouth PO1 3LJ, tel (01705) 291259 or 820921.

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At Your Service

Reunions

HMS Jupiter 1978-80: Brian (Dutch) Holland, ex POWEM(R) seeks shipmates from 2L POs' Mess for possible reunion. Write to 35, Hebdon Bridge Road, Oxenhope, Keighley, West Yorks BD22 9LY, tel 0973 424999 or 01535 644769.

May

HMS Pepys Association: Photos and the story of HMS Pepys, BPF Forward area base in the Admiralty Islands 1945-6, will be on display at the Nautical Club, Birmingham, from noon until 1500 on May 10; lunch by arrangement. Contact John Darling at 6, Horsley Close, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8HB, tel/fax 01372 812023.

HMS Queen 1945-46: Reunion will be held on May 28-29. Further details from Phil Rogers (NN) at 31, Wheatlands Road East, Harrogate, HG2 8QS, telephone 01423 504734.

June

Seaman Specialist Comrades Association: Summer function at the Mountbatten Room, HMS Dolphin (Fort Blockhouse) on June 5, 2000-2359hrs. Details from SSCA Secretary, 21, Merrivale Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth, Hants PO2 0TJ.

HMS Bicester (L34 & M36): Reunion buffet arranged for June 5 at the Littlebury Hotel, Church End, Bicester. Ring Dave Braybrook for details on 01992 583272.

888(Pho-Rece) Naval Air Sqd, Ceylon & East Indies Fleet 1944-46: Reunion at Talbot Hotel, Southport, Lancs, June 7-9. Contact Maurice Smith, 28, Ashwood Drive, Humberston, Grimsby, tel 01472 816440.

Pembroke '84 Club annual Warrant Officer and Senior Rate Steward's Reunion (serving and ex-serving) will be held in the WOs, SRs and SNCOs Mess, HMS Nelson, on June 18. Further details from WOSTD R.C. Mitchell, Wardroom House Manager, HMS Nelson, tel 01705 724261.

HMS Sparrow Reunion on June 18-20 at Grand Hotel, Great Yarmouth. Contact J. Draper on 01322 523438.

HMS Auckland - Tobruk June 1941: Reunion for June 24 at 1400, Southsea, Naval War Memorial. Shipmates attending please contact J. Bennett on 01705 379730.

HMS Glory Association: Next reunion on June 25-27 at HMS Heron, Yeovilton. Further details from Peter Warde, 91, Dingleberry, Olney, Bucks MK46 5EU, tel 01234 711611.

The Figgard Association of 'old boys' welcomes non-members to a reunion lunch in Devonport on June 26. Contact Ivor Norsworthy on 01752 663330.

July

Portsmouth Field Gun: searching for 1955 Crew Members for 44th anniversary reunion at Portsmouth Home Club on July 2. Contact H.A. (Fuzz) Fussey, 74, Ridgestone Avenue, Bilton, Kingston upon Hull,

HU11 4AJ, tel 01482 811389, fax 01482 222187.

Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Crew Reunion at HMS Culdrose on July 2-3. All ex-FAA Field Gunners are welcome to attend. Contact Jimmy Andrews, 14, Scott Close, Stubbington, Hants PO14 2HD, tel/fax 01329 664007, e-mail FAAFGUN@aol.com

Jungle Cocktail Party: The Commando Squadrons and Commando Helicopter Force are holding their annual cocktail party at Sherborne Castle from 1900 to 2100 on July 9. Rig: Mess Undress, white jacket optional, dinner jacket. After 2100, music and fireworks. Bring your own picnic. All Officers with a rotary wing background welcome. Cost with partner £40. Written requests with Mess No. or cheque and address by June 11 to JCP Committee, 846 NAS, RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset BA22 8HT.

HMS Leeds Castle First Commission reunion: July 10 at 7pm at the Durham Indoor Bowling Club, Durham City. Contact Dave on 01665 712598 or Jim on 0191 386 6320.

HMS Wensleydale 1942-45 Association: Reunion and commemorative service, followed by buffet, will be held at St Margaret's Church, Hawes, in Wensleydale, N. Yorks, on July 11. Please muster at Church by 1015. Details from Henry Lehmann, 13, Park Rd, Denmead, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 6NE, tel 01705 255495.

Hong Kong Flotilla Association hold their reunion on July 24 at the Union Jack Club, London. Details from John Fleming, tel/fax 01703 844195.

Ex-Field Gunners: Royal Tournament organisers are staging a one-off special event on Monday July 26 incorporating a reunion parade in the arena of as many ex-Field Gunners as possible to mark the last competition at Earls Court. Blocks of tickets (at £12.50 each) have been reserved. Contact Tournament organisers on 0171 799 2323 to register.

Over to You

HMS Charity - one of the first ships dispatched to participate in the Korean War: Can any reader confirm that Charity steamed the most miles of any UK ship during the Korean War? In 1952-53 an ex-German E-boat, renumbered MTB 5212, possibly exceeded 41 knots in Channel trials. Does anyone know what speed it achieved? Does anyone know what the top sustainable speed is for an RN ship? Contact Gordon E. Green, 17, Vista Close, Hornsby, NSW, 2077, Australia.

Researching RNAS Crimond, Rattray (HMS Merganser) with a view to writing history. Barrie Downer would appreciate information, photographs, pilots' log book details, anecdotes, construction and layout of site, training squadrons (incidents/accidents) and personnel (civilian and Navy) associated with or based at Crimond. Any original photographs, documents etc. will be returned. Contact Barrie K. Downer, 26, Landale Road, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire AB42 1SU, tel/fax 01779 473145.

Collision between HM ships Barham and Duchess: Ian Wilson would be interested in contacting eye witnesses of the collision between HM ships Barham and Duchess off N.E. Ireland in December, 1939. He believes the wreck of HMS Duchess may in 1945 have been depth-charged by the 22nd Escort Group in mistake for a U-boat, not having been charted. Contact Ian Wilson, North Down Borough Council, Town Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down BT20 4BT, tel 01247 270371.

HMS Uva, HMS Fox, Datalawa: If you were stationed at HMS Uva, HMS Fox or Datalawa in Ceylon, during or after World War II, would you please contact J.S. Robinson at 17, Ochry-Bryn, Halkyn, nr Holywell, Flintshire CH8 8ES.

Royal Navy Land Army: If you have any information regarding the RNLA, could you please contact Roy Pawson at 69, Newholm Drive, Silverdale, Willford, Nottingham, tel 01159 815028.

Mr Blayney, Trincomalee, re Bert Pinkney: Tommy McCormack is trying to contact Mr Blayney, former OC MTB in Trincomalee area, regarding AB Bert Pinkney, who was wounded while serving with him. Please contact Tommy on 01325 320050.

Napoleonic prisoners of war: Working on prisoners of Napoleonic War on prison hulks, Ph Singeot is looking for the following books: *The English Prison Hulks*, by W. Branch-Johnson, published by Phillimore; *Prisoner of War Ship Models*, by E.C. Freeston, Nautical Publishers CY; *Prisoners of War in Britain (O.U.F.)* Abell; *Prisoners at*

Portchester Castle by C.E. Cooper, published by Portsmouth Museum in 1973; *The French Prisoner*, by L. Garneray, translated and published in 1957. Please send or write to Ph Singeot, 14 rue des Roses, F 60460, Precy/Oise, France.

HMS Vectis and HMS Seraph: Craig Twaddle would like to hear from anyone with information or photos relating to these two destroyers. His grandfather, John Tweedie, served on these ships during the 1920s when they were attached to the depot ship HMS Columbine at Port Edgar. Contact Craig at 53, Lochshot Place, Livingston, West Lothian EH54 6SQ, or e-mail craig.twaddle@gpecm.com

HMS Runce, 1943: Would anyone who travelled across the USA, up through the Rockies, and on to Vancouver Island to commission HMS Runce on Christmas Eve, 1943, please contact S.F. Tiffin, 2, Falconry Court, 7, Fairfield South, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey KT1 2UR, telephone 0181 549 0326.

Sea Vixen, XP925 with 899 Sqdn, HMS Eagle: If you have any knowledge of this aircraft or any other Sea Vixen, especially pictures of her in action, the Air Training Corps at Haslemere would love to hear from you. Contact Flt Off Kevin Burchett RAF VR(T), 48, Hibiscus Grove, Bordon, Hants GU35 0XA, or telephone 01420 488719.

Gosport's Navy: RAF Gosport and HMS Siskin Veterans Association members John Parfoot and Denis Budden are trying to put together a book on 'Gosport's Navy', telling the stories of the establishments in the area. They would love more information on the oil tanks; Clarence Yard, Fort Monckton (the

Navy's role); the Haslar Test Tanks; HMS Centurion gunboat yard. If you can help, contact John Parfoot, 97, Green Crescent, Rowner, Gosport, Hants PO13 0DW, or telephone 01329 286626.

HMS Glamorgan, CPO G. Blackburn: Grant Blackburn and two brothers were christened on the ship in the early 1970s and are in search of the ship's bell. Any information would be gratefully received. Please contact Grant Blackburn on 01458 272452.

Vice Admiral Sir William G. Agnew 1898-1960: Would any surviving relatives of Sir William please contact Graham K. Salt, 6, Flamingo Court, Fareham, Hants PO16 8PO.

HMS Gloucester sunk May 22, 1941 off Crete: Mrs Sheila Mansell-Barlow's late husband, Lt Cdr J.O. Mansell, reported missing, was the pilot of the plane attached to Gloucester when it was sunk. I have often wondered if he had taken off in the plane or went down with the ship. Can any survivors answer my query? Contact Mrs Sheila Mansell-Barlow, 3, Jellicoe Avenue, Garmore, Aberfoyle, Stirlingshire FK8.

Warrant Wardmaster V.L. Peers served at Haslar Naval Hospital, Bighi Hospital, Malta, as well as on Iron Duke, Effingham and others. One of his commanding surgeons was Rear Admiral Ferguson. If anyone has any memories of Mrs V.L.M. Peers' late husband, would they contact her at 14, Montague Graham Court, Kidbrooke Gardens, Blackheath SE3 0PD.

HMS Kingsmill on loan from US Navy: Having sailed her back from the US and going with her to Normandy, Ronald Walsh recently found out that she was the HQ Ship for Assault Force G2 on Gold Beach. He

would like to contact anyone who was on Kingsmill to get more details of her duties as HQ Ship. Contact Ronald Walsh, 23, St Anne's Grove, Fareham, Hants PO14 1JH.

MG Special, reg no. MG 4092, at one time owned by a Naval Officer based on Portsmouth or Plymouth: Andrew Bradshaw would like to contact this officer to gain more information about this car. Having acquired significant parts of the car he is involved in re-creating it. Contact Andrew Bradshaw, 43, Hertford Street, Cambridge CB4 3AF. He can also be contacted regarding the MG Car Club.

HMS Cardiff Deployment Book is now a website, and can be accessed at <http://www.taylorsweb.freemove.co.uk/cardiff>

HMS Campania: Stuart Usher's grandfather was posted from this ship don't days before it sank after a collision in the Firth of Forth, taking a lot of his personal possessions with it. He wonders exactly where the wreck lies - is it marked by a particular buoy? And does anyone have any details of a Navy clearance diving team which dived on the wreck? Contact Stuart at 34, Marsh Lane, Hemingford Grey, St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 9EN, tel/fax 01480 461382, e-mail susher8368@aol.com

HMS Berwick: cruiser of frigate, any commission and any ranks, please help Berwick-upon-Tweed to learn more about its warships and the crews manning them. Please contact Phil Rowett, Longridge Towers, Berwick, Northumberland TD15 2XH, tel 01289 308628.

Author requests wartime crews recollections/experiences, tragic/humorous concerning "B" Class destroyers: KEITH, BASILISK, BEAGLE, BLANCHE, BOADICEA, BOREAS, BRAZEN, BRILLIANT, BULLDOG. Ian Hawkins, Bacton, Suffolk IP14 4NT

Did you work on or know anything about the City of Benares, SS Volendam or other ships involved in evacuating children overseas during WW2? We are making a landmark series for BBC Radio 4 and need your help. Call Helen Simms on 0117 930 0889.

Calling Old Shipmates

Ray Loveday ex RPO 1966-78, wants to hear from Rob (Wacker) Payne, Pete Boyle, Red Evans, Ian Mingham plus many more. Contact him on 01949 831495.

HMS Bold Pathfinder: Are there any of the old crew left? If so, contact P.K. Cresswell, 20, Winchester Close, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wilts SN3 4HB, or tel 01793 827291.

HMS Belfast 1960-62: Gabby Haines, where are you now? Please get in touch with Ken Etheridge on 01329 280517 or Ernie Smith on 01460 30651. We are looking forward to your call.

HMS Moorpoint: Ray Johnson would like to contact any crew members of the boom defence vessel HMS Moorpoint and latterly HMS Barbecue, berthed in Bermuda 1948-49. Just to name a few that come to mind: the skipper, Lt Cdr Griffiths, Stokers: Chapman, Morris, Broome, Brandon; L/Stoker Houghton, PO Grimsdell, L/Tel McLeod and Cook Fletcher. Contact Ray Johnson, 32, Devonshire Close, Staveley, Chesterfield S43 3DB, tel 01246 471957.

SD(L) Luncheon Club: Lt Mike Draper runs the thriving SD(L) members Luncheon Club, at present with 63 members but many more to find. They hold two Friday lunches a year solely for SD(L)s and two Sunday lunches including wives for SD(L) and SD(R) combined, using the wardroom at HMS Collingwood. If you qualify and want more details contact Lt Mike Draper on 01329 825877 or e-mail mikedraper@cwcom.net

HMS Unicorn Association members are trying to find their mess mates from first commission 1943-46: Mess 12a, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 64, 71, 72, 73: second commission 1949-51: Mess Chiefs (A), 3, 17, 36, 42: third commission 1951-54: Mess 2, 6, 58, POs (A), RPO, Communications, RM Barracks. Contact E. Bosworthick, 3, Arundel Close, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 4QR, tel 01442 255821.

HMS Yarmouth - Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel: Any old Yarmouth's who would wish to contribute to the sponsorship of a Yarmouth seat in the Chapel should forward any donations with cheques made out to the 'Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust' to Capt A. Morton DSC RN Retd, 'Elphinstone', 81, Yealm Road, Newton Ferrers, Plymouth PL8 1BN. He will then forward them on to the trust to ensure they are attributed to the 'Yarmouth' seat. He also has brochures with more details.

HMS Gamecock, RNAS Bramcote, Nuneaton: Where are you girls? WRN(RPO) Jo Daniels, LWRN(Tel) Joy Humerstone, WRN(Tels) Audrey Mitchell, 'Babs' Green, Joan Mellor, Jill Tiltmarsh - how about a reunion? If interested call 'Brummy' Mo Taylor or Harry Taylor on 01203 464397.

Ex GI, Fred Beech, formerly on HMS Diamond 1967-69: Ray (Legs) Shipley, ex Chef on Diamond, would like to get in touch again, also Dave Mackay (Munchy), also on Diamond, could you please ring 'Legs' on 01634 830984.

Lt Edward Ashley Hobson DSC and bar: 1941-46, served in various submarines, mainly Porpoise, Seadog, Mediterranean and Far East. Also Tudor, in command: exploration of seabed with scientists. He died in Malta after illness aboard HM Submarine Wolfe, July 1947. If you have any memories please contact J. Niell on 01243 779493 or write 32, Cavendish Street, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 3BS.

Coastal Forces in the English Channel June to December 1944, please contact P Lobbey, 32, Limerick Gardens, Cranham,

■ Material submitted for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed, and addressed to The Editor.

■ Entries are free of charge, but repeat items can only be inserted on payment of our run-on advertising rate - contact 01705 725062.

■ Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.

■ Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot always be met.

■ There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.

Service for HMS Hood

THE PRESIDENT of the HMS Hood Association, Lt Ted Briggs - now the sole survivor of her last ship's company - will read the lesson at the association's memorial service at St George's Church, Portsea, Portsmouth, on May 23 at 11.30am.

The service will be conducted by the Rev Ronald Paterson, who served in the battlecruiser 1933-36 - who will also lead the annual service of the Coastal Forces Veterans Association at the same church on May 16 at 11.30am.

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Belying its looks, the Dart was a popular aircraft. It was easy to fly and enabled the Fleet Air Arm to develop its torpedo-attack theories which were put into practice with such devastating effect against the Italian fleet at Taranto in 1940.

The type also provided a landmark for the FAA, being the first aircraft to land on a carrier deck at night, that event taking place on July 1, 1926.

In total, 117 Darts were delivered to the Navy and served in HM ships Eagle, Furious and Courageous (in the latter as late as 1933).

A floatplane version of the Dart was fitted with a second cockpit and dual controls, and was operated as a trainer by the RAF Reserve in the late 1920s.

The Blackburn Dart was powered by a 450hp Napier Lion IIB or V. It had a climb rate of 600ft a minute, a range of 285 miles and a service ceiling of 12,700ft.

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RE-SURFACE AS AN RNR DIVER

DIVERS who have left the Navy can keep their links with the Service – and get paid for it.

The RNR Clearance Diving Branch is on the look-out for recruits, who are paid every day they work and at a comparable rate to their full-time colleagues.

On top of that the maximum, tax-free bounty of £525 a year is paid if entry is within three years of leaving the Navy and if at least 12 days training a year is put in.

Upper age limits for joining are

40 for junior rates and 45 for senior rates, and most of the joining administration can be completed before personnel leave the RN.

There are opportunities for RNR clearance divers to fill gapped billets under the Full Time Reserve Service scheme in which personnel can serve in a gapped billet for three months to two years. Ratings or officers who serve under the scheme can claim all the entitlements of Regulars, with the possibility of extending the length of the contract if the billet remains gapped.

Training can be done either at Faslane, Devonport or Portsmouth

and is co-ordinated through the Inspector of Ships Diving who is the branch manager. There is no need for personnel to attend evening training sessions at RNR units.

The training programme is designed to enable personnel to keep up to date with diving practices so they can expect to work alongside RN colleagues. Often, the experience of the commercial diver can benefit the diving team and help improve techniques in underwater engineering.

■ More information is available from CPO(D) Bob Hayter at the Inspector of Ships Diving office,



Fleet Diving HQ, Reclaim Building, Horsea Island, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hants., PO6 4TT (tel. Military 93832 4116 or 01705 224116).

● **PO(D) Ted Mangion RNR prepares for a deep diving exercise in the Kyle of Lochalsh. While working full-time with the Southern Diving Unit at Portsmouth last year, Ted hit the headlines when, during a search of the River Alver at Gosport, he found a hammer involved in an alleged attempted murder of a rating in the area.**

UK funds retiring help for Russians

FORTY retiring Russian military officers are the latest to have completed a three-month resettlement course – funded by the Britain's Ministry of Defence.

The £1 million-a-year project has been operating for over three years at centres across Russia, training 6,000 retiring officers in civilian specialisations. Over two-thirds get jobs within four months of completing the course.

The latest class graduated from a centre near Moscow, the event being attended by members of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee, in Moscow for meetings with their Russian counterparts.

Resettlement scheme wins Govt's accolade

THE ARMED Forces resettlement programme run by Lincolnshire Training and Enterprise Council has won the praise of the Department of Education and Employment.

In the Department's latest edition of its Good Practice series, the scheme is cited as an example to follow. From its outset six years ago, the Lincolnshire programme has been employer-led, with local and regional employers speaking and tutoring at the TEC's briefings and workshops.

Together the Council and the employers have now designed conversion training programmes with

work placements to help Service leavers back into work.

In all the TEC has assisted over 7,500 ex-Service personnel to find jobs, something which has achieved Ministry of Defence recognition by MOD giving the Lincolnshire council the status of "preferred supplier to the Career Transition partnership" that the Ministry operates with Courtis Consulting plc for delivery of resettlement provision.

■ Information on the scheme is available from Brian Mitchell, Assistant Chief Executive, Lincolnshire TEC, Beech House, Waterside South, Lincoln, LN5 7JH.

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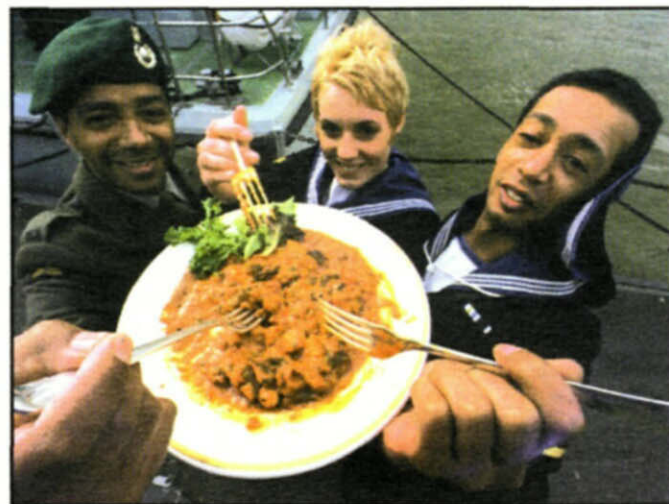
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Navy dishes up an ethnic winner



THE PROOF of the meal is in the eating for these three who are among the first Naval personnel to sample the Services' new ration packs catering for the religious needs of ethnic minorities.

The tasters – who gave the packs a vote of approval – are WO2 Ray Sey RM, WSTD Angela Weallans and LREG Pat Mathiot.

The 24-hour packs, for use in operational situations, were prepared by award-winning chef Kevin Williams of HMS Fearless during a Meet the Navy media facility led by Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson. It highlighted the

Service's success in doubling its recruitment of members of ethnic communities.

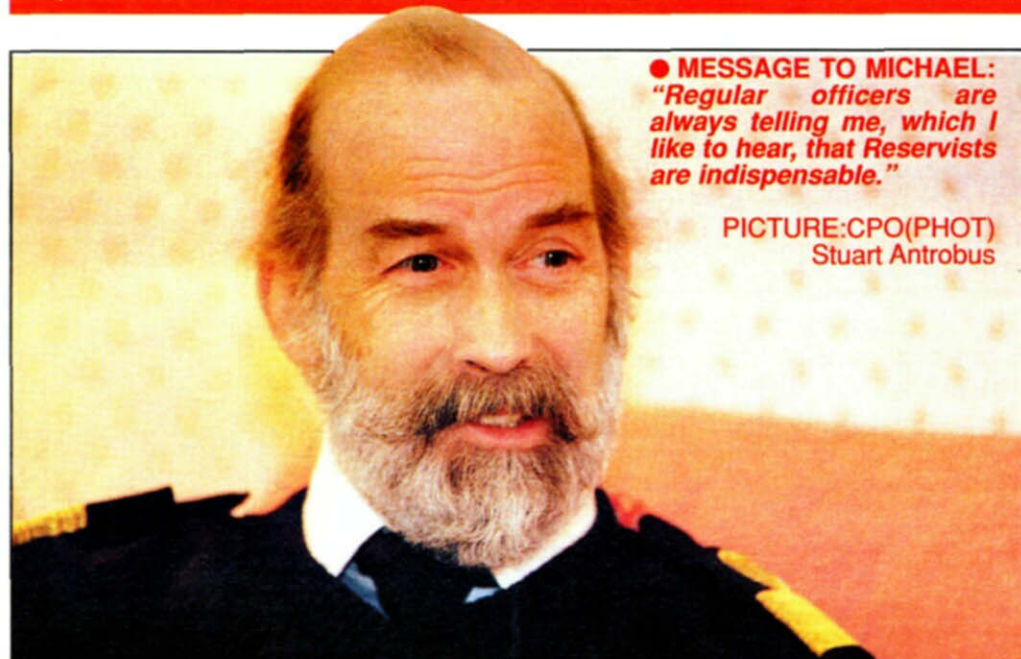
Mr Henderson viewed and sampled the ration packs and other food cooked by Kevin, who has received a commendation for Asian Chef of the Year judge Sarwar Ahmed.

The packs meet the requirements of Moslem, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu members of the Forces, with three menus for each group.

For the Moslem and Jewish religions, the meat has been slaughtered in accordance with their requirements, while the Sikh and Hindu dishes contain vegetable or meat-substitute meals.

Picture: CPO(PHOT) Paul Cowpe.

ARMY PRINCE PUTS ON A NAVY HAT AND SHOWS HE'S -



● MESSAGE TO MICHAEL:
"Regular officers are
always telling me, which I
like to hear, that Reservists
are indispensable."

PICTURE: CPO (PHOT)
Stuart Antrobus

With his sailorly full set, Prince Michael of Kent – a dead ringer, as many have noted, for his grandfather George V, the quintessential 'Sailor King' – makes an ideal figurehead for Naval organisations. Except that he's an Army man ...

Jim Allaway went to Kensington Palace to ask the Honorary Commodore Royal Naval Reserve, now also Patron of the Maritime Volunteer Service: Why all this sudden interest in the Senior Service?

It's a good question! Curiously enough there was a thought that I might have gone into the Navy when I was younger. When I was 15 I joined the frigate HMS Loch Fada on work up trials to get a taste of Naval life – which I found absolutely riveting.

"And then a year later I spent two weeks of my summer holidays at Dartmouth, where a very patient senior lecturer took me under his wing. But he tried to persuade me into some of the mysteries of Physics, which I'd never been particularly strong at – and so, in spite of the best efforts of the Senior Service I never quite succumbed to its charms. I have now, though!

"I served 20 years in the Army and sometime after I left in 1981 I was asked to be Honorary Commodore of the RNRS. Unfortunately that didn't last very long as they were disbanded in 1994, which was very sad.

"But soon after that I was asked if I would like to be Honorary Commodore of the RNR – which was something I never expected either. I don't know why they picked me – other members of my family already had various Naval connections and I didn't, so they wanted a fresh face, I dare say ...

"I think I was lucky to be put into this post at a time when morale was going up. I wanted to get my teeth into the thing earlier on but was dissuaded – and I think I can understand why, now, because it was a difficult time.

"So it's been nice to have seen the way the whole feel and attitude of the RNR has greatly come on in the past year or two.

"It had been through a terrible time. Two major things happened to it. First, the numbers had been drastically reduced. They were up to 7,500 and that was cut right back. People were uncertain as to the future.



● ALL WALKS OF LIFE: Prince Michael meets Royal Marines Reservists on board HMS Fearless during a Joint Maritime Course off the west coast of Scotland.

"The other thing was that they had a lot of small vessels which they used locally at different stations around the coastline for their training. They loved their little boats – and then they were taken away from them.

"So as they saw it, they didn't have any particular purpose in life. But once we'd bedded down – got down to what you might call rock bottom, really – things began to change very rapidly from the point of view of what we were there for, what our task would be.

"Everything began to benefit from that moment on. The Reserve training centres were streamlined – we've got three new ones now, at Rosyth, Liverpool and Birmingham. And when the Strategic Defence Review came along some very positive things were done and we were very happy with the way it affected us.

"For two reasons. First of all,

will rise to 3,850 in the next few years and that's going to be a big challenge to our recruiters. The opportunities and the attractions of the Reserve now are far better than they used to be, so it's not as though it's a hard sell – it's something people jump at once they have it explained to them.

"But the great thing is this integration between the Reservists and the Navy and that's something we aim to continue."

"I try to get out and about as much as I can to visit them. Last October I went to the Joint Maritime Course off the West Coast of Scotland – one of the biggest ever and in the most filthy weather! – and joined HMS Fearless, so I got to talk with some of the Royal Marine Reservists as well.

"It was fascinating to hear about

'It is often the RNR uniform that you will see more than any other'

our strength went up again by ten per cent. And then also our training days per Reservist, which had been 25 days a year and didn't compare favourably with those of the TA and the RAFVR, went up to 35 days. That made a big difference to us – a very happy circumstance.

"We're reaping the benefits of closer contact with the Navy. On average, every day sees about ten per cent of the RNR working with the Navy and some of our Reservists work full-time for up to two years.

"They spend a great deal more time at sea. They bring skills and attitude which are different – and regular officers are always telling me, which I like to hear, that Reservists are indispensable.

"Their civilian jobs undoubtedly put certain constraints on the time they can give to the Naval Service. We have 2,800 in the RNR which

the wide range of jobs they all do in civilian life. There was even a poet I met. I said to him, rather condescendingly, 'Oh, do you publish any of your work?' – and somebody dug me in the ribs and said he was a best-selling author!

"In the old days, before my time, the RNR was looked upon as rather an afterthought. Now it's a totally different attitude – the way the RNR is appreciated by the Navy itself has changed.

"I've said to Navy people: 'Is it helpful to you to have all these Reservists, because after all, by the very nature of the fact that they are Reservists, you may find you have to look after them a bit more, perhaps?'

"And they say 'No, no, no – on the contrary, they fulfil some jobs in a way that even our people can't do.' So they bring a different kind of professionalism.

Here's something I've only recently discovered. As you know, we have various different branches in the RNR and one of them is the Air Branch. It's been a sort of tradition that testing of new types of aircraft coming into service in the Navy – like the new Merlin helicopter – is done by RNR pilots. It's no secret, but it's a little known fact, all the same. And it's wonderful for these civilian pilots to be able to fly Naval aircraft for a week or two a year.

"Where so many naval establishments have been cut, there are certain parts of the country where you never see a Naval uniform. They've

NO MERE FIGUREHEAD

THE YOUNGER son of the Duke of Kent and Princess Marina, Prince Michael was born on July 4, 1942, a few weeks before his father was killed in a flying accident while on active service. Educated at Eton, he entered the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1961 and was commissioned into the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own) in 1963. He qualified as a Russian interpreter and was appointed to the Ministry of Defence with responsibility for foreign military attaches. In 1970 he attended the Junior Command and Staff Course at Warminster and was later posted to the United Nations Forces in Cyprus. He subsequently served in the Defence Intelligence Staff and left the Army in 1981 in the rank of Major. Prince Michael is Honorary Commodore RNR and Patron of the Maritime Volunteer Service and the Sailors Soldiers and Airmen's Families Association.

dropped the bar on uniform being worn in public now, which is good news – but even so, it is often the RNR uniform that you will see more than any other.

"All in all the RNR has got the bit back between its teeth now. It's a happy ship – and I'm very proud to be part of it."

"The Maritime Volunteer Service closely complements the RNR effort. It was born out of the RNRS when that came to a halt. There were a lot of maritime skills that were going to be lost and over the years many people living in this country became very sad to see how the Navy and the Reserves – and the merchant fleet, for that matter – had declined in strength.

"The MVS was formed to put that right – its team of men and women is determined to pass on to a new generation those maritime skills which underpin our national

way of life.

"Members of the MVS again come from all sorts of different backgrounds. Some used to serve in the Navy itself or in the Reserves. Others used to be merchant seamen – and a lot of them are people who have never had any connection with the sea before but just have a love for it and want to demonstrate that.

"And now we've got about 50 units around the coast to support the various authorities – and that means local people have a better understanding of things maritime, too."

"I'm pleased to say that we have now been formally recognised by the Navy because of our work in education and training young people in nautical skills. And the close association we enjoy with the Navy

enables us to offer wider training qualifications and help young people to find jobs.

"We've recently managed to get hold of some much-needed training craft, including a Fleet Tender, and we hope that each individual unit will have its own harbour launch for more local daytime training.

"Funds for all these things will be locally provided and meanwhile we're building our expertise in other things, like oil spill response.

"I was up to visit one unit in Dundee at the end of last year and I hope to visit two others in May in Eastbourne and Southampton. The spirit is terrific. The boat they've got at Dundee, for example, when I saw it it was in rather a sad state – but they're terribly resourceful and full of motivation and I know they will make something marvellous out of it."

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Enid Blyton
TOYLAND

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Send your completed entries to - The Gang Plank Club,
Navy News, HMS Nelson, Queen Street, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

Name Age
Membership Number
Address

The Judges decision is final. Employees of Navy News and relatives of Navy News and Butlins employees are ineligible.

Closing date - 30th June 1999

No Ahoy for me this month, I'll be land bound for the next few weeks whilst me bottom is scrubbed, the bottom of me boat I mean!!

Before me and the crew set sail for our summer cruise we need to get the ship ship-shape! Whilst the crew scrub off the barnacles I'll be turning out all me old bits of rope and charts and smartening up me Captain's cabin.

I might even get Susie to sew me some new Plank trousers and shirt, these old ones are getting a bit smelly, I've been wearing them for three years!

Whilst I get me ship ready to sail you could have a good old clear out of your bedrooms, you never know what you might find under your bunks! Next month we'll be off on the high seas, have you got any good ideas where we could go?



Something to smile about!

IT'S NATIONAL Smile Week from 17 May to 21 May so make sure you are ready to widen that grin and parade those pegs!

Colgate make toothbrushes and toothpaste and have given Captain Plank some toothbrushes to give away to lucky members.



Sheena Karim from Colgate is pretty hot on teeth and she says:

"All of us need our teeth as they help us to:

- ☐ Chew our food properly.
- ☐ Speak clearly.
- ☐ Give our faces their shape and form.

So you should look after your teeth by:

- ☐ Brushing properly
- ☐ Brushing twice daily
- ☐ Changing your toothbrush every three months
- ☐ Go for regular check-ups with a dentist
- ☐ Cut down on the sugary foods between meals."

CHAT PAD

WHAT A clever lot all you members of the Gang Plank are! Myles Farrier wrote us a brilliant letter all about navigation satellites, so if anyone else knows about satellites write to us quickly because we want to bring you a whole article on them very soon.

Thanks to Jade Fraser for her letter, she's a fan of Bugs Life, is anyone else? Hello to Chloe and Thomas who liked the presents that Captain Plank sent to them.

Verity Taylor and Tanya Millar are both sea cadets and love it! You can see a picture of Verity with the President of the Sea Cadets, above. She's the one pointing to the boat!

Help! Panic! our joke pile is getting a bit low, can you help by sending in jokes by the sack load?

Pets Corner

THANKS FOR all your letters about your very clever pets.

Keep them all coming and keep sending your photos - you never know your clever pet could be the "pin-up pet" for June!

Ben Bolton's dog, Chucky is very cute but thinks he's a cat!

He rides on the cat's back, eats the cat's food and goes out of the cat flap. WOW, MEOW!

Happy May Birthdays!

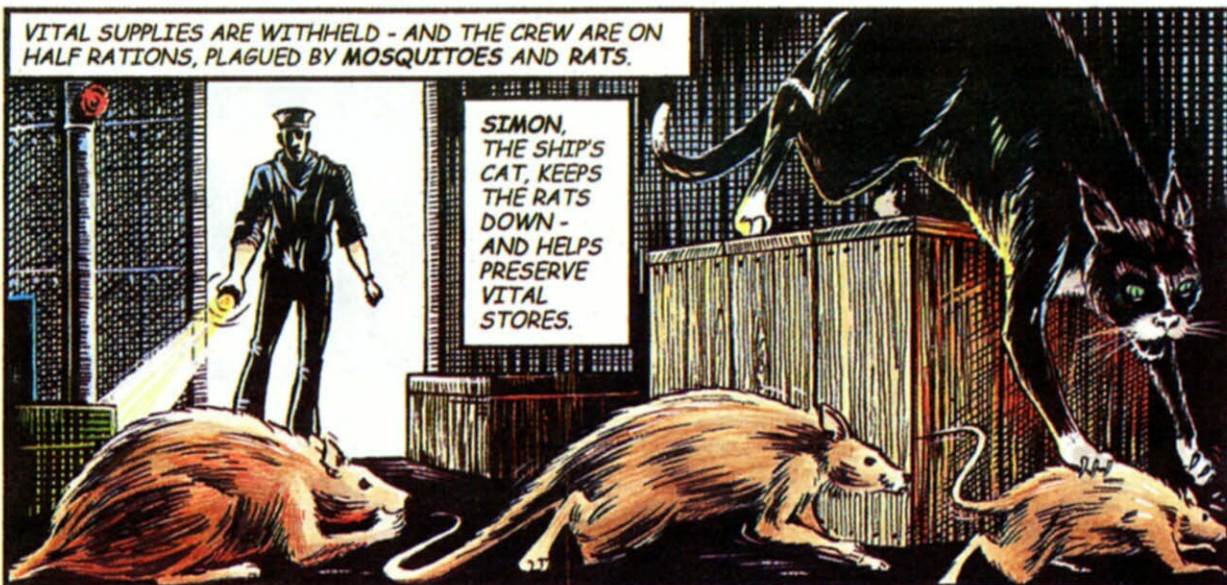
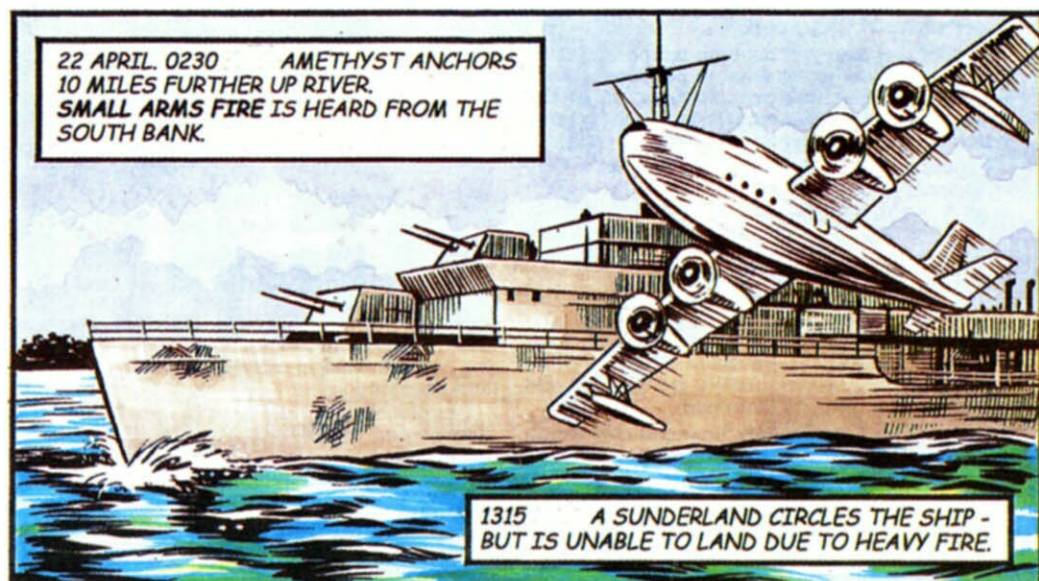


Jet Sharp, Alana Harris, Oliver Curtis, Hannah Lewis, Gareth Williams, Kayleigh Dyda, Richard Pugh, Scott Sutton, Natalie Humphries, Samuel Taylor, Jessica Howgate, Joseph Stray, Tara Ward, William Hiller, Callum Miller, Scott Farwell, Marc Ball, Andrew Ball, Jack Hawsworth, Stephen Lapham, Kevin Buckley, Edward Cookson, Kenneth Saunders, Rebecca Farress, Harry Bailey, Luke Holland, Duncan Brookes, Kirsty Jowle-Morgan, Benjamin Riddleston, Polly Welch, Jennifer Gallagher, Johan Rietveld, Jack Cunningham, Carl Turner, Charlotte Harrison, Michelle Park, Scott Chaseley, William Lee Townsend, Jaan Dervishali, Keeley Wainwright, Gemma Lousie Parkin, Callum O'Connell, Sophie Thomas, Gavin Moore, Paul Murage, Timothy Finn, Joe Creighton, Darren Bowhan, James Goddard, John Carpenter, Claire Chipp, Nathan Phillips, Michael Teidman, James Turley, Stuart White, Gregory Wroe, Kevin Ayrey, Victoria Martin, Jonathon Greenall, Mitchell Barber, Joseph Wright, Jonathon Clayton, Andrew Lawrence, Robert Brown, Caleb Howgego, James Thorogood, Sera Llewelyn Davies, Jonathan Kemp, Matt Relf, Paul Gasson, Amy Warren, Robert Fletcher, Harry Litherland, James Warren, Sarah Sargent, Ian Morrice, Shane North, Ben Wilkinson, Timmy Rickard, Dean Barnett, Amy Thompson, Arran James Simpson, Zara Dulling, Kristian Behling, J Mann, Jane Morgan, Jeremy Talbot and Keith Higman.



PART 5: APRIL 22, 1949 - HMS AMETHYST, THE WORST OF HER WOUNDED EVACUATED, HEADS UP THE YANGTSE. HMS LONDON AND BLACK SWAN, SENT TO ESCORT HER, HAVE BEEN FORCED TO RETIRE AFTER COMING UNDER HEAVY FIRE FROM SHORE BATTERIES ...

The Yangtse Incident



5/7

To be continued.

© VINCE HEWITT 1998

WIN A TICKET TO THE BIGGEST SHOW IN TOWN

IT IS no secret that this year's Royal Tournament may be the very last. Held at London's Earl's Court, the Tournament features all sorts of exciting displays from all three Services.

Events include the RAF Dog Display team, a cliff assault by a crack team from the Royal Marines, stunt riding from the White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team and a race by teams from the daredevil RAF Motorsports Association.

As usual, one of the most exciting parts of the show will be the Royal Navy Field Gun competition. In our June issue we'll be giving you a real insight into the people that make up some of the Field Gun crews so you can cheer them on.

But for this month you can win one of three family tickets to the Royal Tournament. All you have to do is write to us and tell us why you should be in the audience for that last magical moment of the Tournament's 120-year history. Good luck. Don't forget to include your name, address and membership number.

REMEMBER that we promised you Technocat would find out more about Captain Cook? Well, he's "pawed" over all the books and here's what he's found ...

The son of a farmer, Capt James Cook was born in Yorkshire in 1728. He was just 12 when he started work in a shop. Later he served as a merchant seaman and in 1755 joined the Navy.

A brilliant navigator and chart maker (cartographer), he was a 40-year-old lieutenant when he was given command of HM bark Endeavour.

This was designed to carry coal, and so was strongly built, could carry large cargoes and was able to sail in most types of weather - and Cook was to take her on a voyage of discovery to the South Seas.

Scientists and artists accompanied him to record his findings. The crew included skilled craftsmen, such as carpenters, sailmakers and musicians. There were also armed soldiers on board - Marines - who made sure they all behaved themselves and, more importantly, protected the ship from pirates or unfriendly natives.



● CAPT JAMES COOK: He knew that vegetables are good for you

Cook's orders were 'Eat up your greens'

Life on board ship was pretty uncomfortable in those days. Many seamen would die on long voyages, mostly from disease. But Cook was a good captain who made sure everyone took regular baths and aired their bed clothing. He understood that fresh fruit and vegetables such as cabbage helped prevent scurvy, a disease caused by lack of vitamin C, and insisted on the men having as balanced a diet as possible - even if they didn't like it much!

Capt Cook and Endeavour travelled thousands of miles to the east coast of Australia. He called the place where he landed Botany Bay, because of the many new plants he found there.

He led two more expeditions, in 1772-75 and 1776-80. In 1774 he travelled the furthest south anyone from Europe had ever travelled, visiting Easter Island in the South Pacific Ocean.

In 1779 he visited the Hawaiian Islands where he was welcomed by the natives and treated like a king. But after calling back there when his ship was damaged in a storm, they grew suspicious, fighting broke out and Cook was beaten and stabbed to death - a sad end to the life of a great explorer who always tried to make friends with any new people he met.

Membership Application Form

Please enrol me as a member of The Gang Plank Club. I enclose a PO/cheque (payable to Navy News) for £3.25.

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Skydivers train in the USA



● Four members of Exercise Desert Vortex take a break from team training at Eloy, Arizona.

A TEAM of Navy Skydivers flew to the USA for a two-week training camp with the sport's World Champions.

Perfect weather and daytime temperatures of 25 degrees enabled the team to pack in an average of 60 jumps each over 14 days, under the direction of the current eight-man formation skydiving champions 'Arizona Airspeed.'

Expedition 'Desert Vortex', to Arizona's Eloy drop zone, saw the team jumping from 14,000ft from a variety of aircraft including a DC3, a Shorts Skyvan, Twin Otters and even a couple of air balloons.

The team was led by 899 Squadron's Lt Phil Lee and included Lt Al Veal (HMS Beaver) Lt Si Gair (DNR Manchester) S/Lts Rich Liddle and Dave Patton (BRNC Dartmouth) CPO Mick Tyler (CFM Devonport) POMEM Steve Lambert (HMS Bristol) PO Robbie Way (BRNC Dartmouth) and Cpl Steve Naldon (RAF Lyneham).

Support for the privately financed expedition from Director Naval Recruiting, the RN & RM



● Lt Si Gair in freefall over Eloy, Arizona

Sports Lottery, Cotswold Outdoor Clothing, DNPTS and local welfare and adventurous training funds helped to offset the cost of both travel and coaching.

Skydiving courses are available to Servicemen throughout the year. See your PTI for details.

Drafty... The War Drafting Control Office

Situations vacant

MAA: Office Manager of Manchester Career Liaison Centre, required August for one year.

MAA: Office Manager of London Career Liaison Centre, required August for one year.

CPO (any) a shore billet as Coxswain of Cardiff University Royal Naval Unit. Required from December for two years.

CPO (any) a shore billet as Coxswain of Oxford University Royal Naval Unit. Required from January for two years.

POWTR for the British Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. Normal POWTR duties. Required from August for 30 months.

War, crisis and the Reserves

A UNIQUE and important section of the Naval Drafting Directorate is that of the War Drafting Control Office (WDCO).

This is the office which co-ordinates the allocation of RN active service and reservist rating manpower to crisis and war billets, as well as being responsible for administering all Royal Navy and Royal Marines ex-regular rating and other rank reservists.

The section also manages the Dual Draft system (pre-matching ratings to Crisis billets) and the Full Time Reserve Service scheme. NDD plays a major part in 'Crisis Regeneration' exercises, with WDCO being the co-ordinating section in the Drafting Directorate for such evolutions.

These exercises are always useful but the next one, possibly in late 2000, will be especially important as it will be the first following the many manpower changes since last year's Strategic Defence Review.

The new Reserve Forces Act

1996 (RFA 96) provides considerably more flexibility in the use of reserves than RFA 80 did, making the roles of reserves more relevant to today's needs.

The new Act covers females and allows reserves to be used, for example, in UN peacekeeping operations, something which could never have happened under the old Act.

Every rating/other rank normally has a reserve liability when they leave Active Service - if they are in receipt of a service pension when they are released, they are enrolled in the Recall Reserve (RR), other-



wise they join the Royal Fleet Reserve (Non Commissioned).

Which Act applies?

The Reserve Forces Act you are subject to basically depends on whether you joined the service before or after 1 April 1997, the date that the new Act became law.

Clearly, nearly all individuals being released still have an RFA 80 reserve liability but they are all given the option during their Release routine to elect to transfer to RFA 96, with the pros and cons of both Acts being explained to them at that time. To date, over 1,200 ex-regular Naval rating/other rank reservists have elected to be

subject to the new Act.

Under the new legislation, the period of reserve liability for ratings/other ranks will normally be six years while, under RFA 80, it is three years for the RFR(NC) and until 55 years of age for Pensioners of the RR. Reserve liability is not optional, neither is it selective.

One of the obvious peacetime benefits of RFA 96 is a scheme called Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) which enables RFR and RNR personnel to volunteer to fill gapped service billets. It is not available to Pensioner Recall Reservists.

The length of a single FTRS Commitment (contract) can be

between three months and two years, with a formal agreement being drawn up between the service and the individual. Reservists may apply for further Commitments and preserved pension rights apply retrospectively once an aggregate of 2 years is completed. Reservists can apply either in general terms or for a specific billet; however, FTRS employment will always depend on a suitable job being available so cannot be guaranteed but, basically, the more flexible an applicant is prepared to be, the better the chance of a Commitment.

There are currently about 140 reservist ratings, mostly from the RNR, on FTRS. About 30 of them are serving in ships while others are in a wide variety of billets, in particular Shore Comms and Ops.

From the Service's point of view, the scheme is helping to provide manpower to Units that may otherwise have to remain gapped while, to reservists, there is the obvious attraction of defined employment without having to commit themselves for several years, as well as, especially in the case of the RNR, providing opportunities for further training and experience.

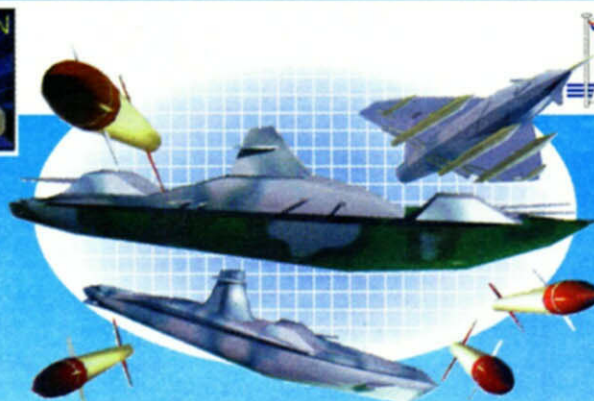
Any reservist interested in FTRS should apply through their Reserve Training Centre if RNR or to the Registrar of Reserves (WDCO) if Royal Fleet Reserve (Non Commissioned).

The War Drafting Control Office

The War Drafting Control Office staff, with Centurion Building phone extension numbers, are:

WDCO and Registrar of Reserves	Lt Cdr Nigel Parry	2384
Assistant WDCO / Office Manager	POWWtr Tracey Newell	2105
Office Writer	WWriter Rebecca Nellist	2485
Reserves Administration:		
RN Pensioners	Mrs Pauline Bennett	2046
RN RFR (A - K)	Mrs Mary Parry	2253
RN RFR (L - Z)	Miss Lisa Whitaker	2199
RM RFR / Pensioners	Mrs Gail Brooker	2513
RFR Annual Reporting & FTRS	Mr Ron Harley	2252

DESIGN
2000



Remember the Navy News Millennium Calendar Competition?

A big "Thank You" to the many, many readers who sent in their designs. It has been a very difficult task choosing the winners as all of the entries were superb.

We were impressed by the skill, and attention to detail, shown by the older age group, and amazed and delighted at the imagination of the very young readers... Well done to you all!!!

The twelve winning designs of a Futuristic Navy will appear alongside the present day Fleet, in the prestigious Navy News Millennium Calendar.

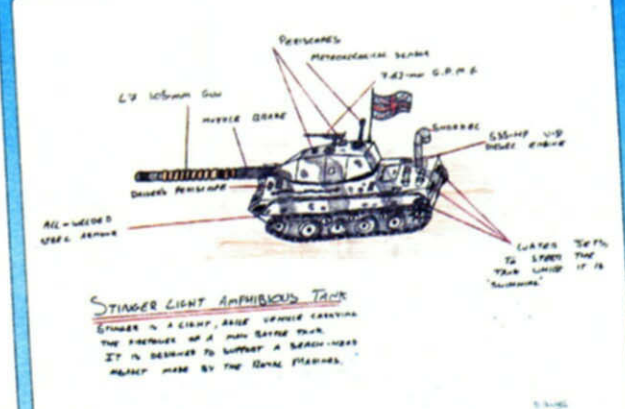
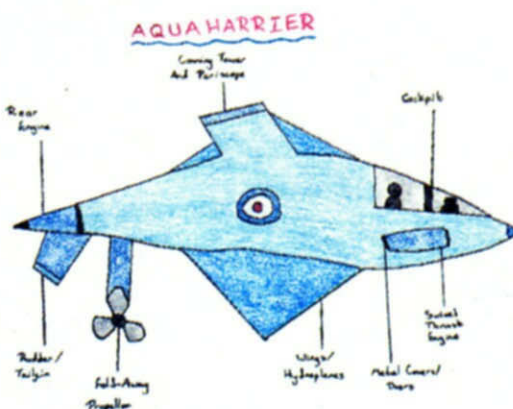
Supplies anticipated from September 1999 Price £6.

We are expecting a huge demand and orders will be taken from August.

The Business Manager, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH.

NAVY NEWS

Millennium Competition Winners



Winners of the Navy News Millennium Calendar Competition

Overall Winner, 12-18 age group... James Beedle of Hampshire. Overall Winner, 6-12 age group... Michael Roberts of Powys. ... Jenny Leggot of Surrey. Bryan Bowdell of Lancs. Chris Braid of Fife. Jade Fraser of Cleveland. Cheryl Marr of Peterhead. James Duncan of Peterhead. Tom Wilson of Hants. Nicholas Gyte of Suffolk. Matthew Vanns of Kent and Richard Bowdell of Lancs.

We regret we cannot show all the winning designs within this advertisement, but look out for them in future issues of the Navy News and in the Calendar. They are not to be missed!



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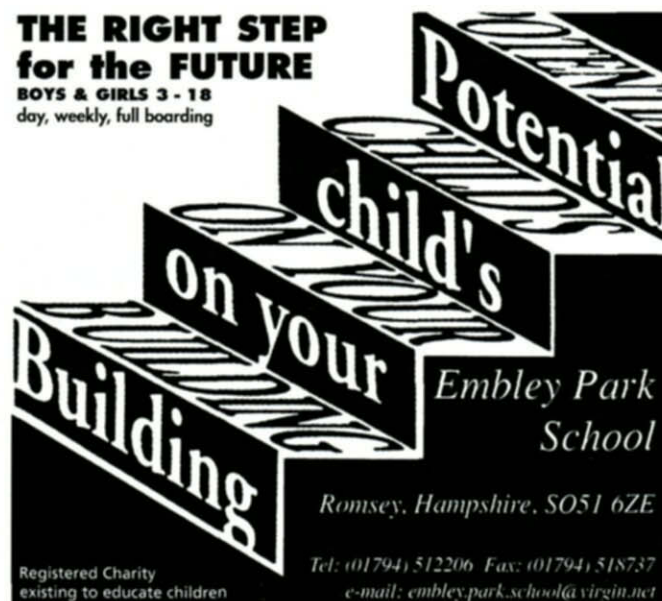
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Frigate rides shotgun for French carrier

HMS SOMERSET has been guarding the French carrier FS Foch as her Super Etendard bombers attack targets in Serbia and Kosovo.

Somerset went to a high state of alert when the first wave of attacks began and has kept up round-the-clock defence watches for a solid six weeks as the campaign continues.

The ship tracked hundreds of Tomahawk missiles, fighters and bombers while monitoring the air threat to the Foch and scanning the seas for any signs of the Yugoslav navy.

Reconnaissance aircraft were also launched from the Foch and video footage passed to HMS Somerset showed beyond doubt how effective many of the missions have been.

OM Jamie Hough, who saw the tapes, said: "The bombing raids on Serbia and Kosovo are the end product of our work here - if we didn't protect the carrier she couldn't do her job."



● LOOKOUT: OM Matt Mullan keeps a watchful eye on the Adriatic

"We are providing an essential service and it's good to see the results of our protective duties."

Remaining at such a high state of readiness places a huge demand on the ship's company but Somerset's CO, Cdr Michael Cochrane, said that they had coped admirably.

He said: "The commitment, determination and dedication of

the team has not wavered and their professional approach stems from a desire to end the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo. In supporting the Foch, I believe that we have done our duty in attempting to end a regime of oppression."

□ Somerset is due to be relieved by HMS Grafton and is expected to return to a rousing reception at Devonport at the end of April.



● FAREWELL: HMS Grafton sails for the Adriatic where she is taking over HMS Somerset's job of helping to protect the French aircraft carrier FS Foch. Picture: SFP

Grafton sails early as the savagery in Kosovo intensifies

AS NAVY NEWS went to press Portsmouth-based HMS Grafton became the latest Royal Navy warship to join forces in the Adriatic.

As the refugee crisis in the Balkans deepened and bombing raids over Serbia reached a new intensity, Grafton was given an emotional send-off by friends and relatives when she set sail on April 12.

The ship, which is joining the French carrier group and taking over from HMS Somerset, is commanded by the Navy's youngest sea-going Commander, 33-year-old Bob Sanguinetti.

As Grafton left for the Adriatic two weeks earlier than originally planned, Cdr Sanguinetti told Navy News: "We have been watching developments in the Balkans very closely, as you would expect."

"Every man and woman on board has an important job to do within HMS Grafton and preparing for this deployment has provided a very strong sense of purpose and focus. Morale is extremely high."

"I think we share with most people an anxiety about what is happening in Kosovo and a willingness to bring the humanitarian catastrophe to an end as soon as possible. Whatever contribution we can make, we will be ready."

Grafton is no stranger to the world's hot spots - exactly a year ago she was leaving Portsmouth for an eight-month tour in the Gulf which included operations off the coast of Iraq and she only arrived home in December.

Cdr Sanguinetti said: "We are a professional military organisation and as such our men and women expect to go away for some time on deployments."

"But we also have organisations in place to ensure that our families and friends can be kept up-to-date with what the ship is doing while we are away from home."

The volatility of the situation in the Balkans makes it impossible to say exactly how long Grafton will be away, but she is expected back some time in the summer.

□ The partnership between Somerset, Grafton and the Foch came as a direct result of the St Malo agreement signed by British and French Defence Ministers on board HMS Birmingham last year.

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(12.3.99), 1; CCWEASWSNAYSM - Dry, Nil;
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CCAEEAL - 296 (1.9.96), 1.
PO(EW)(O) - 300 (16.5.95), 1; LS(EW) -
lnt (17.3.98), 1; PO(M) - 197 (16.9.96), 3;
LS(M) - 201 (13.2.96), 2; PO(R) - 428
(17.5.94), 1; LS(R) - lnt (11.3.97), 1; PO(S) -
155 (14.5.96), 1; LS(S) - 231 (14.11.95), 1;
PO(D) - 465 (17.5.94), 1; LS(D) - 719
(10.3.92), 1; PO(MW)(O) - 69 (19.11.96), Nil;
LS(MW) - lnt (11.3.97), Nil; PO(SR) - 496
(14.6.94), Nil.

Deaths

Support Officer, Royal College of Defence Studies (1982-83). Served 1942-83. Ships included HMS Illustrious, RNEC Manzanora 1948-51, Alert, HM Dockyard Gibraltar, Corunna, Lochinvar, staff of C-in-C Atlantic & S. America, Tiger, Assistant to Director General Ships, Manadon (CO 1973-75), Port Admiral Rosyth 1976-77, Assistant CFS 1977-79, Commodore RNSA 1980-83 and later Life Commodore; member of Royal Yacht Squadron and Square Rigged Club; RNVR Youth Sail Training Trustee; president RN Modern Pentathlon Association 1991-96; member of Forces Help Society and Lord Roberts Workshops. Member of Association of RN Officers. Feb. 24, aged 75.

Capt David Goodwin CBE, DSC, observer and navigator of Swordfish aircraft from HMS Eagle which attacked Italian fleet at Taranto in Nov. 1941. Served 1925-60. Ships: Endeavour, India, Kent, Kent (Malaya), London, Courageous (820 NAS as observer), Eagle (824 NAS), 819 NAS (CO 1941), Concor (1944-44), Glory (Pacific), RN Staff College, RAN loan 1950-52. HMS

LI Cdr Peter Bagley, pioneer of Aircraft Handlers branch and member of AH Association. In Swaziland, Dec. 12.

Andrew Linden Laing, ex-CY. Ships: Euryalus, Nigeria, Warrior, Apollo, Protector, Carisbrook Castle, Centaur, Albion. Member of HMS Euryalus Association. Nov. 15.

Tony Stafford, ex-CPO AMO, member of Yorks. branch of FAA Association. Feb. 20.

LI Cdr Roy John Eade RN (retd), Feb.

Richard (Dick) Squire, ex-L/Tel, WWII. Ships: Aberdonian, Sutfon, Scylla, MTBs (Normandy veteran). Member of Royal British Legion, RN Services Association Swansea and Algerines Association. March 1, aged 77.

Lt R. G. Ancume RNRV. Ships included HMS Pique 1943-45. Member of HMS Pique Association. March 8, aged 85.

LI Cdr C. Cornelius. Ships: Valiant, Burgess, Woolwich, Wagga, Orion, Drake.
The Rev (LI Cdr) J. A. Crace DSC. Ships: Southampton, Hawkins, Quentin, La Melpomene, Ledbury, Vernon, Phoebe, Cumberland, Royalist, Cleopatra, Lioness, Maidstone, St Austell, Verus, Marvel, Zest.
S/LI R. W. Evans. Ships: Juno, Jervis, Saunders, Lancaster, Fulmar, Jamaica, Unicorn, Mercury, Highflyer, Ark Royal.

Jack (Gary) Gibbons, hon. member Fleetwood. March 8, aged 62.

Colin (Jack) Arseneault, Worthing. Ex-CPO(AH), served 1939-64. Ships: Victorious, Falcon, Peregrine, Ocean, Theseus, Seahawk. Dunkirk and Arctic convoys veteran. March 5, aged 80.

Jane Benzie, Grantown-on-Spey & Dist. Ex-CPOwren (Tel.), served 1940-44. March 14, aged 78.

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POAEM(L) Whiteford, RNAS Culdrose ext 2260 or 01326 552260, drafted HMS Illustrious AED, Jan. 4. Will consider any Culdrose front-line draft.

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POWTEL - 929 (1.4.93), Nil;

Frank Stopforth, S. Liverpool. Jan. 4.

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S/LI R. W. Evans. Ships: Juno, Jervis, Saunders, Lancaster, Fulmar, Jamaica, Unicorn, Mercury, Highflyer, Ark Royal.

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BELFAST TO DOCK IN POMPEY

WARTIME cruiser HMS Belfast is to leave her Thames berth for the first time in 17 years for a maintenance period in dry dock at Portsmouth.

The sight of the Belfast entering Portsmouth is certain to attract big crowds of sightseers on June 6 – coincidentally the 55th anniversary of the D-Day landings in which she took a prominent role in bombardment support.

The cruiser will be towed from her normal location as a floating museum in the Pool of London for a month-long overhaul. The work will be carried out by Fleet Support Ltd acting

as sub-contractors Serco Denholm.

The work will involve blasting, re-preservation, and close inspection to establish whether any of her steel plates need to be renewed.

Once the ship has been repainted in new camouflage markings she will be towed back to the Thames.

HMS Belfast was completed shortly before the start of World War II, and was one of the largest cruisers built for the Royal Navy. But her activity during the early war years was curtailed in November 1939 when in the Firth of Forth she became the first confirmed warship victim of a magnetic mine.

The explosion broke her back, and she barely made Rosyth under tow. Her repairs lasted all of three years, and she did not become an effective

part of the Fleet again until 1943. At the end of that year she took part in one of the Navy's most famous battles – North Cape.

Flying the flag of Vice Admiral Burnett, commanding the 10th Cruiser Squadron, she played a major role in the epic battle which ensued and which resulted in the sinking of one of Germany's most powerful warships, the battle-cruiser Scharnhorst.

In 1945 she transferred to the British Pacific Fleet and had an eventful post-war career throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

She arrived in the Pool of London in 1971 to be preserved as a reminder of life at sea during the era of the big-gun navies.

Full details of the ship's arrival times in Portsmouth will be given later.

● HMS Belfast pictured in 1961 when she was the Royal Navy's biggest cruiser and the flagship of the Second-in-Command of the Far East Station, Rear Admiral Michael Le Fanu. She had recommissioned at Singapore under the command of Capt Morgan Giles.



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Matthew shows that uniform determination



THE ANTROBUS family has a uniform approach to a career – especially now that 18-year-old Matthew Antrobus has passed out of the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone with the coveted green beret.

He wore it for this picture with father Stuart – a CPO Photographer on the staff of NATO HQ, Northwood – brother Iain, and cousin Graeme.

Iain is a member of the Royal Marines Light Infantry Cadet Marching Band based at Gosport, while Graeme chose the Army to pursue his career, serving in 21 Signal Regt based near Bath.

Matthew's determination to win that green beret was severely tested – his training was extended due to a series of minor injuries and a broken leg he sustained half-way through the 30-week course.

Picture: LA(PHOT) Tony Leather



IT WAS inevitable that Scott, baby grandson of ex-Navy man Ron Davison would find the right ship's badge for him among the 400 at Horsley Community Centre, South Shields. Ron, chairman of the centre, says the collection was built up through the many Naval guests hosted there over three decades.

Wives' action saves words

WITH the winding up through lack of interest of the Natter-Box – the Naval wives group on Emsworth family quarters near Portsmouth – it looked as though the estate would forever be lost for words.

But thanks to two of the wives, and the people who gave them a helping hand, it was shown that actions speak louder, and the Natter-Box has been re-launched 18 months after its untimely closure.

Claire Dady and Sue Cramm gained the support of Naval Personal and Family Service community workers Taff Jones and Gary Keith – as well as residents of the estate – to restart the Natter-Box.

They successfully contacted local businesses and their hus-

bands' ships for donations of raffle prizes for the planned re-opening, the CPOs and WOs messes of HM ships Edinburgh and Illustrious donating a total of £100.

When the big day came, the opening ceremony was performed by NPFS Area Officer Sheila Owens-Cairns and was well attended by local residents.

Guests included representatives of Havant police, while the attractions included a bouncy castle provided by Hilsa Naval Community Centre, a mini-market and refreshments.

The group meets every other Tuesday morning at the Cricket Pavilion, Hollybank Park, Southleigh Road from 1000. Details from Sue Cramm on 01243 432048 or your local community worker.



● Natter-Box re-opening – with prizes. This welcoming group includes (from right) Sue Cramm, Sheila Owens-Cairns, Taff Jones, Claire Dady and Gary Keith. Picture: LW(PHOT) Chris Wood

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SUBARU is top of the pops for customer satisfaction according to the latest JD Power/Top Gear survey, with two models topping the 114-car poll to give the manufacturer outright victory. The rally-bred Impreza was first overall and the larger Legacy shared joint second place with the Jaguar XJ saloon and Toyota Starlet.

To complete the top ten these were followed by the Skoda Felicia, Toyota Celica, Toyota Picnic, Saab 9000, Honda Prelude and Jaguar XK8 sports car.

All aspects of car ownership experience are included in the survey, ranging from vehicle quality, customer care, warranty, service and parts back-up to vehicle performance and speed of repairing faults.

The cars surveyed were all P-registration vehicles, with no fewer than 24,255 owners completing the detailed questionnaire.

Subaru's points score was the highest recorded in the six years the survey has been running in the UK.

● Subaru UK managing director Ed Swatman celebrates with due satisfaction.



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Right on the button



ITALIAN sporting car manufacturer Alfa Romeo has just brought grand prix-style gearchanging to the realms of roadgoing sports saloons with a new version of its award-winning 156 tagged Selespeed.

Priced from £21,993 on the road, it has two buttons on the steering wheel, a sequential gear lever on the transmission tunnel and a fully automatic transmission function.

Once in motion, the manually-actuated five-speed transmission allows gearchanges without the driver's hands leaving the wheel. There is no need to lift off the accelerator and, a joy for those who face jams, no clutch pedal.

An advanced computer releases the clutch automatically, brings engine and gears to the same speed and then re-engages the clutch, all in a fraction of a second as you change gear either with the buttons or – for those with whom old habits die hard – with the sequential gearlever.

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Proton evolving fast with coupe to better most

GOOD, sound cars from the Far East can lose their lustre in the UK market with some quaint styling, but Proton has put all that behind with its latest range and notably the stunning Coupe Evolution 16V writes Glynn Williams.

Bike thefts runaway rise

INSURERS are to assess the reliability of motorcycle security systems to fight the runaway trend of two-wheel crime and in turn encourage moves which should lead to lower premiums.

The new Criteria for Motorcycle Security (CMS) system just launched is based on the Thatcham practice for cars, with testing by specialist engineers on Thatcham's impartial benchmarking criteria to produce banding.

The move follows a 250 per cent rise in bike sales over the past five years, accompanied by thefts raging at an alarming 20 per cent of sales, with 28,000 machines stolen last year of which fewer than 4,000 were recovered.

Leaded fuel warning

FOUR-STAR fuel's end of the road next January has sparked a warning that drivers of cars running on leaded fuel should trade up now to beat a price-hike of 30 per cent.

The prediction comes from Autocar magazine's experts who say one fifth of all cars currently on UK roads risk engine damage, with the banning of leaded fuel and uncertainty about the effectiveness of Lead Replacement Petrol (LRP).

The forecast is that J-, K- or L-plate cars running on unleaded fuel will rise in value by up to 30 per cent with the change.

Ford's first

FORD topped the sales charts in March, when the launch of the T-registration number plate saw sales up 73.4 per cent on the same month last year to total 370,060 against half a million for the S launch last August.

The Ford Focus was the month's best seller at 20,205 sales, Ford the best-selling brand with 17.1 per cent of the market, and the Ford Fiesta was top seller for the whole of the first quarter.

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The Malaysian manufacturer is challenging the budget-only preconceptions of the marque and signposting its future intentions for sportier niche models with a car that looks good and goes even better.

The new Coupe just launched turns heads even when parked, and out on the road it will match anything and better most in the sub-£14,000 price bracket.

Aggressive styling accentuated by a new grille and sleek front bib spoiler incorporating neat foglamps, and a spoiler on the bootlid, couple with lowered suspension and racy 15-inch Momo alloy wheels give both purpose and effect.

Under the bonnet of this machine, which follows the successful launch of a one-make racing series based around the standard 133bhp 1.8-litre Coupe, is a smooth and sophisticated engine with punch and 7,500rpm red line.

The twin cam 16-valve engine can propel the car from standing to 60mph in just nine seconds, and on to a top speed of 126mph, while a 150bhp performance package based on replacement engine management chip is under development.

Inside, the car is a full four-seater, roomier than the Ford Puma, Vauxhall Tigra or Renault Megane Coupe, as well as more horsepower to the pound.

It's a driver's car though, with superb Recaro bucket seats and Momo leather gearknob in a

sporty specification marred only by a plastic steering rim.

Anti-lock brakes, a driver's airbag, and high quality Oceana green or velvet blue metallic paint are highlights of an impressive standard specification, with the only options £599 for air conditioning and a special order yellow motorsport paint scheme.

For ease of use there are electrically-operated windows, mirrors and headlamp adjustment, and remote releases for the lid to the healthy 19cu ft boot - complete with full-size spare wheel - and the fuel filler flap.

Yet for all its performance the Proton Coupe is not a thirsty beast, averaging nearly 33mpg, over 40 on long runs, and the insurance rating is not too high either, at 15D.

CAR FACTS

MODEL: Proton Coupe Evolution 16V

PRICE: £13,999 on-the-road
ENGINE: 1834cc 16-valve twin cam producing 132.7bhp at 6,500rpm

TRANSMISSION: Five-speed manual front-wheel-drive
ECONOMY: 32.7mpg (combined cycle)

PERFORMANCE: 0-60mph - 9 secs; top speed - 126mph
INSURANCE: Group 15D

WARRANTY: Six year/60,000-mile engine, gearbox and anti-corrosion, three years' free RAC membership and three years' free parts and labour servicing



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So close on debut

THERE was almost a winning debut for the Ships Support Agency squash team, who lost in the final of the RN Squash Racquets Association establishment knock-out competition.

The team – WOMEA Bob Giddings, Capt Richard Pelly, CPOMEA Fred Workman, Cdr Dave Langbridge and CCMEA Chris Dugate – have all represented Plymouth in the Inter-Command event, but experience could not stop them losing 3-2 to HMS Nelson.

Four of the team also represented the Navy in the Inter-Service championships at HMS Temeraire – Capt Pelly, Cdr Langbridge and WOMEA Giddings represented the Veterans and CCMEA Dugate won his first RN cap in the Seniors.

Draw prize is big trip south

FIRST prize in the tri-Service rugby draw on May 26 is two tickets for the England v Australia centenary rugby match in Sydney on June 19 – including flights and accommodation. Second and third prizes are tickets for an England home international next year.

Tickets are £1 each and inquiries for the draw, sponsored by BAe SEMA, should be made to Lt Andrew Mackay, Fleet Policy Div. Co-ordinator, CinC Fleet, HMS Warrior, Northwood, Mddx, HA6 3HP (01923 837553). Cheques should be made out to the RNRU.

Heron are the top guns

SHOOTERS from HMS Heron proved top guns when the birds were flying at the Navy's Inter-Establishment clay pigeon competition.

The inaugural shoot at the Portsmouth Area Clay Pigeon Club's brand new layout at Tipner was blessed with good weather, and Heron's competitors reaped most benefit.

The winning team of CPO Hugh Smith, PO Ian Mitchell, LAEM Fez parker, AEM Tony

Pedley and Mr Phil Simpson (FR Serco) scored 359 out of a possible 500 targets.

Second place went to the home team from Portsmouth, scoring 343.

The trophy for individual High Gun went to CPO Hugh Smith, with 83 out of 100.

Commodore Richard Hibbert, Chairman of PACPC, presented the prizes to the winning shooters.

Back to the basics for weightlifter

NAVY weightlifter Simon Mansell has decided to re-invent the wheel – and is hoping to benefit from this back-to-basics approach at big events next year.

WO(MW) Mansell's first lift this year was at the Scottish championships in Glasgow where, despite having an off day, he managed to take first place in 35-40 age group in the 105kg category.

He had already qualified for the British Masters, again in Glasgow, but a slip in the clean and jerk at 112.5kg (when he

dropped the bar) caused Simon to slip from silver to bronze position.

But things are looking up.

"I have had the benefit of a coach, Jim Ferguson, ex-Scottish and Commonwealth lifter and now a world standard masters lifter, and we have set out to re-invent the wheel, as it were," said Simon, who is based at RNAD Crombie at Cairneyhill, Dunfermline.

"I have had to effectively start again, which is the reason behind the reduced

totals, but there is a master plan!

"This year's British was my last major competition in this age group. I now move up to the 40-45 age group, and the aim is to move up to the superheavy-weight category at 105kg plus, as I have had trouble making below 105kg."

Simon aims to lift at this category at next year's British championship, for which he has already qualified, and to qualify for next year's European championships in August this year.

Record-breaker Bob celebrates with try

RECORD-breaker Sgt Bob Armstrong capped a fine performance against the RAF with a try as the Royal Navy ran out 28-7 winners, writes Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows.

HRH The Princess Royal and Commodore Tim Laurence were special guests at Kingsholm and saw Sgt Armstrong win his record-breaking 11th full cap.

Although an early charged-down kick gifted the RAF a converted try, the RN XV never looked in danger.

With the Dark Blue tight five dominating proceedings up front, Lt Roger Readwin finished off a clever back-row move from the base of a set scrum 40 metres out.

Supported by a tenacious mid-field of CPO Ian Fletcher (HMS Neptune), PO Dave Sibson (HMS Dryad) and Mne Christian Charmichale, who all reached new heights in attack and defence, the RN produced an inspiring first-half performance.

Two clinical breaks by Sibson gave left wing England international Musician Spencer Brown half chances to finish off long-distance tries, which he did in magnificent fashion.

With three successful conversions from Cpl Paul Livingstone (Cdo Logs Rgt) the RN led 21-7 at half time.

Although the second half never reached the same level for the RN, they coped with the problems of veteran England international Rory Underwood, and in the last eight minutes Armstrong bulldozed over for the final try and guaranteed the Willis Corroon Bowl.



● My ball – Mne Del Cross soars high to secure good RN line-out possession (right).

● Above: The Princess Royal presents the Willis Corroon Bowl to Sgt Bob Armstrong.



RN team shows art of boxing

THE Navy Boxing team travelled to Poole in Dorset to compete in the annual show held in the town's arts centre.

First Navy man in action was MEM Max Maxwell (HMS Cardiff), whose fast combination punching was too much for the Poole man. Maxwell knocked him out in the second round with a double right-hand jab.

OM Al Alker (HMS Sheffield) also enjoyed a quick win, delivering a devastating right-hand counter which sent his opponent reeling to the canvas.

Another promising youngster, MEM Andy Farrow (HMS Sultan), had too much work-rate for his opponent, and his barrage of non-stop punching earned him a unanimous decision.

The final team match saw AB Daz Junnior (HMS Fearless) put in a back-to-form performance.

Daz's switch of attack from head to body overwhelmed his gutsy opponent. Both men received warm applause.

Mne Swede Swaynestone (40 Cdo RM) and MEM Kav Kavanagh (HMS Cornwall) put on an exhibition bout.

Both men put in clean, accurate punches, and it was all square as they went into the final round, but a combination by the Marine caught Kavanagh, closing his eye, and the referee stopped the bout.

Meanwhile a newcomer to Navy boxing, OM Kev Davie (HMS Dryad), was presented with the Boxer of the Night trophy in Bedford after winning a unanimous decision against the current Home Counties champion.

Command coach POPT Q Shillingford (HMS Sultan) said he was delighted with Davie's progress: "Kev is a talented boxer who can go a long way in the sport – how far he goes is up to him."

POPT Shillingford, on behalf of RN boxing, also expressed his gratitude to those involved in releasing sailors and Royals from establishments and ships to represent the Service.

Chinese group sees RN system

A CHINESE military sports delegation has visited the Royal Navy's sports headquarters.

The seven-strong team included service heads of sport.

The aim of the visit was to brief the Chinese delegation in support of their study of the military sports system in the UK armed forces.

During their time at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth, the Chinese watched LPTQC 40 under instruction as well as viewing an RN fitness test bleep test. They also toured the facilities at Temeraire and Burnaby Road.

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Tough match starts season

BRIGHT sunshine and a strong, bitterly cold wind at the picturesque West Cornwall Golf Club made for an interesting start to the new Navy golf season, writes Cdr Gary Skinnis.

The course was in superb condition for the match, which marked the 30th anniversary of the fixture.

A county team that contained a mixture of experience and youth was captained by ex-Navy stalwart Malcolm Edmunds, who is shortly to pitch his skills on the Seniors European Tour.

The ten-times Navy champion has maintained a high standard of play since leaving the Service, and coupled with a fitness that belies his "advancing years," decided to try his hand in the professional ranks. All in Navy golf wish him well.

The county showed enviable strength in depth, and although there were fine performances from Navy players, the result was a comfortable victory for the home side.

RNGA captain, Cdr Ian Yuill (AFPAA HQ) led from the front with a fine performance, combining well with different partners to record wins at both fourball and foursomes, succumbing to his ex-RN colleague Edmunds only on the final green in singles play.

Three players made their RN debuts in the match, and all recorded one victory.

The most impressive of these was PO Kevin Thornton (RNAS Yeovilton), who took only a short time to find his undoubted talent to record a resounding singles victory over his county opponent.

OM Neil Dickinson (HMS Dryad) and PMA Alan McNeil (DMCT) teamed with Yuill respectively to gain their first points.

Dickinson then took his opponent to the 18th hole, losing narrowly, while McNeil, who shows excellent ball-striking ability, will be the first to recognise that he needs to achieve more consistency.

Other Navy wins came from Cpl Chris Graham (RMR Bristol) and S/Lt Alex Johnson (RAF Cranwell).

The previous day the Navy team lost to a strong club side, with a fighting half point from the management team making the score slightly more respectable.

There is a busy fixture list ahead, and key RNGA events this year are:

- May 5-7: Inter-Command matchplay Championships (China Fleet Club)
- June 23-25: RN Strokeplay Champs (Liphook, Hampshire)
- July 22: Navy Cup Final (Southwick Park)
- Sept 26-30: Inter-Service Champs (Little Aston, Birmingham).

Up to 12 entries for the strokeplay championships will be available to individuals not selected for Command sides.

Any player, handicap ten or under, who wishes to be considered for one of these entries should contact either their RNGA Command representative or the secretary RNGA (Portsmouth NB 26490) direct.

Provisional individual entries pending Command side selections are acceptable.



Sport



In brief

Tricky catch

COLD weather made for demanding fishing in the spring competition of the Portsmouth Game Section of the RN and RM Angling Association.

Most entrants had some success, and the winning weight of three rainbow trout (8lb 11.5oz) went to Sgt Keith Lowe (HO Band Service RM). Other prizes went to Pat Collins (NBSA), Cdr Stu Ellins (FOSF) and Lt Simon Lewis RNR (HMS Victory).

More details on the sport can be obtained from Cdr Stu Ellins (PNB 26525) or WOMEA Iain McAllister (PNB 25147).

Swiss hit

COMBINED Services skiers won individual and team events in the Swiss Army Ski Championships.

Two Navy skiers, Cpl Steve Cotton and Lt Jeff Choat, were selected for a three-man team to contest the event – a 10km cross country race and giant slalom.

All finished in the top ten in the cross country, and with Lt Choat winning the giant slalom, he finished fourth overall, with Cotton fifth. The team won the slalom against tough opposition including Austria and the USA.

Pre-season win

THE NAVY rugby league team beat the Civil Service 24-0 in a pre-season match.

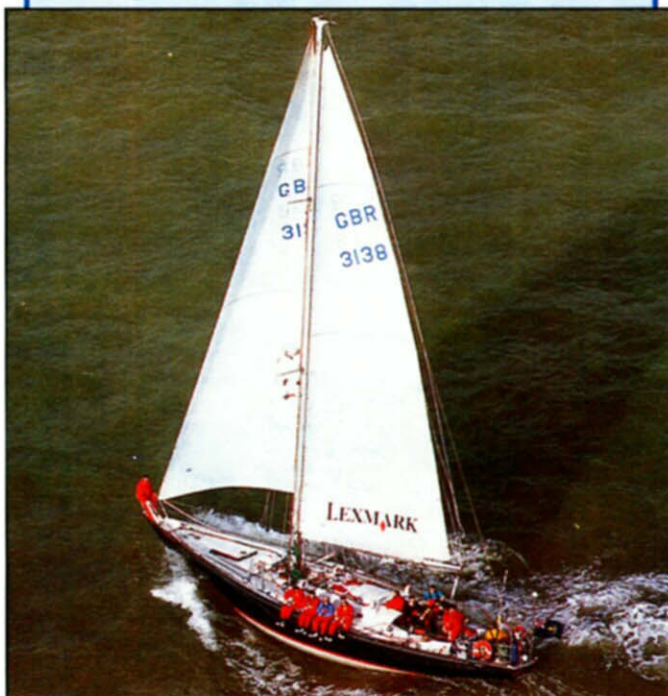
The sailors applied pressure from the start, making fine angled runs, and were 16-0 up at half time.

Up the wall

THE RN and RM Indoor Climbing Championships are to be held at the end of the month. Details are available from Lt Mick Cooke at RNAS Yeovilton ext 6027.

Strong showing by netball team

Navy lose out in close finish



A CLOSE finish in the latest leg of the Transglobe 98 Inter-Service round-the-world yacht race saw the Navy finish behind the RAF and Army, subject to confirmation.

Navy yacht Adventure (pictured) had taken an unusual route south, gambling on catching more predictable trade winds, and at one point led by several hundred miles.

But all three yachts bunched in the final hours of the 5,000-mile third leg from Hawaii to Hong Kong, and the time between first and last was only an hour and a half.

There are still places aboard Adventure for some remaining legs. The personal contribution is around £400.

The race, via Singapore, South Africa, Argentina and Trinidad, is due to finish on December 31 at Greenwich.

Up-to-date information on the race is available on the race website at www.transglobe.org.uk

WEEKENDS of intensive training paid off in terms of Navy netball performance – but the squad still failed to win a game at the Inter-Services.

The Navy women, with five new members, played a strong defensive game, and the first quarter score was only 7-5 to the RAF. A win was a distinct possibility.

But greater experience, and a tactical change, put the RAF into an unbeatable lead. The final score of 44-19 did not reflect a game of high standards, with the RN giving possibly its best Inter-Services performance for years.

The Army piled on the pressure in the next game, taking a 15-6 lead, and with LWSA Michelle Spear going off injured the Army – who took the title for the first time in 13 years – won 56-28.

Lt Liz Whiting and POWOM Pippa Dredge have been selected for the Combined Services squad.

The Navy is recruiting new players; contact RNWSO (9380 23958) or Lt Pam Fisher (9352 30731).

Forthcoming events include Pontin's Tournament (May 21-23), and the team is organising fund-raising events for a tour to Australia in October, including a disco/BBQ at Centurion in July. For more details contact LWWTR Wendy Boulton on 93844 2124.

Runners prove their pedigree

THE END of the cross country season saw Navy athletes take to the roads, setting some impressive times and performances, writes Lt Graeme Riley.

The Fleet Half Marathon, incorporating the Inter-Services Half Marathon Championships, gave Naval endurance runners the chance to demonstrate that their second place at the Inter-Services cross country was no fluke – and they did not disappoint, producing two champions and a runner-up.

Cpl Mark Croasdale (RM Chivenor) turned the tables on Army champion Cpl Andy Arrand, putting nearly a minute between himself and Arrand to win the Inter-Service duel in 67m 27sec.

Backed by a strong team, Mark led the RN to another second in the Inter-Service competition behind the Army.

Cpl Mark Goodridge (RM School of Music) made up for a disappointing finish to the cross country season with one of his best runs, finishing 8th overall (5th Inter-Service), just ahead of Sgt Chris Cook (CTCRM) in 11th, seventh in the military race.

Following a year dogged by injury, Lt Steve Gough (HMS Collingwood) followed his cross country bronze with another Inter-Service medal – this time gold.

Building up to the London Marathon, Steve had a confidence-building win in the Vet 40 category in the overall race and the Service event.

POWTR Lindsey Gannon (Northwood) had an excellent run in the women's race to finish 9th overall and second Servicewoman, although the women's team finished third.

WO Steve Payne (40 Cdo RM) managed an excellent fourth place in the Plymouth Hoe 10, pressed hard by WO Terry Pares and Sgt Chris Cook (CTCRM), who finished fifth and eighth respectively.

WO Payne, by now full of confidence, put in a good performance at the Teignbridge 10, which incorporated the Devon 10 mile Championships.

Surging to the front, he held on to the lead until seven miles, when he was caught and passed.

Steve dug in however, and while he couldn't hold on to the winner he held on to second place (first veteran).

CRS Taff John (Northwood) finished fourth in the Worthing 20.

At the Easter Bunny 10k in Yeovil, LCK George Roper set a hot pace but was passed by the eventual winner at four kilometres.

However, George stuck to his own race to finish second, ahead of POWTR Paul Levick (HMS Heron), both runners recording personal bests – Paul by 27 seconds.

Welsh side beats Services

TRAINING sessions proved costly to the Combined Services Under 21 rugby team when they took on a Welsh district XV.

A collision on the pitch at RAF St Athan put one player out with a fractured rib, and another followed on the morning of the match with a twisted knee.

The Combined Services U21s had the benefit of a strong wind in the first half at Llantwit Fardre RFC, Pontypridd, and the initial pace was frantic, with both sides struggling to master the conditions.

The Services drew first blood with a try when the Welsh made a handling error, but the District came back strongly, scoring a try from a tapped penalty.

The half ended with intense pressure from the Services, but despite the wind at their backs, AEM Dave Pascoe at scrum-half was shackled by his opponent and found it difficult to release his backs.

The second half saw Mne Ben Mardle take over at fly-half, but the pressure was now coming from the

home side, and they made it count with a converted try from a line-out.

The CS front row, including OM(C) Liam O'Loughlan, were fighting hard to maintain a firm platform, but forays into the Welsh 22 usually resulted in the ball turning over in the tackle. A fine break down the left was finally swung out for the right winger to score, but staunch defence by the Services was undone by handling mistakes, and a turnover ball ended with the Welsh scrum half dropping a goal.

A brave CS attempt to run the ball from defence ended in a five-metre scrum, and the Welsh again crashed over to finish the scoring at 24-12.

CS Man of the Match was openside flanker and inspiring skipper MID Matt Parker, and CS U21 colours were awarded to AEM Mike Slater, AEM Dave Pascoe, OM(C) Liam O'Loughlan, AEM John Court and MID Matt Parker.



● In unison – the RN and RM men's crew.

Picture courtesy of JET Photographic, Cambridge.

Sound start for rowing squad

MEN and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines rowing squad had a good start to the season in the prestigious Head races on the River Thames.

The RN entered a women's team for the first time, and they came 118th out of 250 crews, beat-

ing the Police squad – the Army and RAF had not entered.

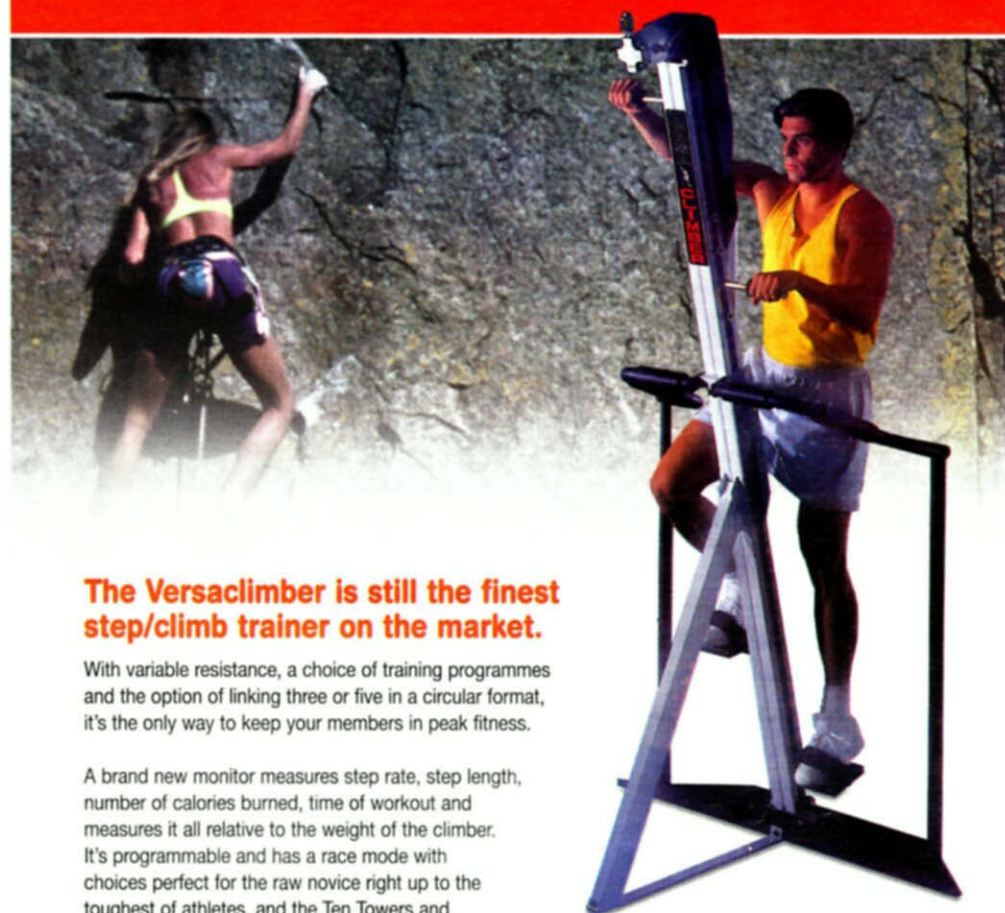
The men managed 101st out of 390 crews, soundly beating the RAF and Army by more than 20 seconds to win the Forces Trophy.

Both squads will be training and competing over the summer, key events being the Naval Air

Command Regatta, Sherborne (May 22), the Joint Services Regatta at Peterborough (June 13) and Henley (June 30 - July 4), as well as a training camp for all standards (including beginners) at Eton (June 1-11).

For more details contact Lt Rob Carr on 9352 35565.

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ILLUSTRIOUS CLEARS HER DECKS FOR ACTION



WITH HER decks cleared for action, HMS Illustrious conducts pre-washing during post-refit trials off the South Coast.

This picture by PO(PHOT) Dizzy De Silva clearly shows her enlarged flight deck area which can cater for a greater number of embarked aircraft as a result of the removal of her Sea Dart missile system. The ship's bow is

now dominated by a Goalkeeper air defence weapon.

Illustrious is due to become operational by the summer and ready, if necessary, to relieve HMS Invincible off Kosovo.

During her trials she operated with a Merlin helicopter of 700M Naval Air Squadron, the aircraft trials unit based at RN air station Culdrose.

USS Churchill's launch 'shows the strength of our Alliance'

FOR THE first time a warship has been named after Winston Churchill. The USS Winston S. Churchill is also the first United States warship to be named after a British politician and only the fourth to be named after any Briton.

Defence Secretary George Robertson and his US counterpart, William Cohen, were present at the Maine shipyard to see the destroyer launched by Lady Soames, Sir Winston's only surviving child.

Also there were the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, and the US Secretary of the Navy, Richard Danzig.

The naming of the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer has been planned since President Clinton announced it in the House of Commons during his visit in November 1995.

The three other US Navy ships named after British figures from history are the USS Alfred, an armed merchantman named after King Alfred; the USS Raleigh, a frigate; and the USS Effingham named after the third Earl of Effingham who resigned his commission rather than fight the Americans during the War of Independence.

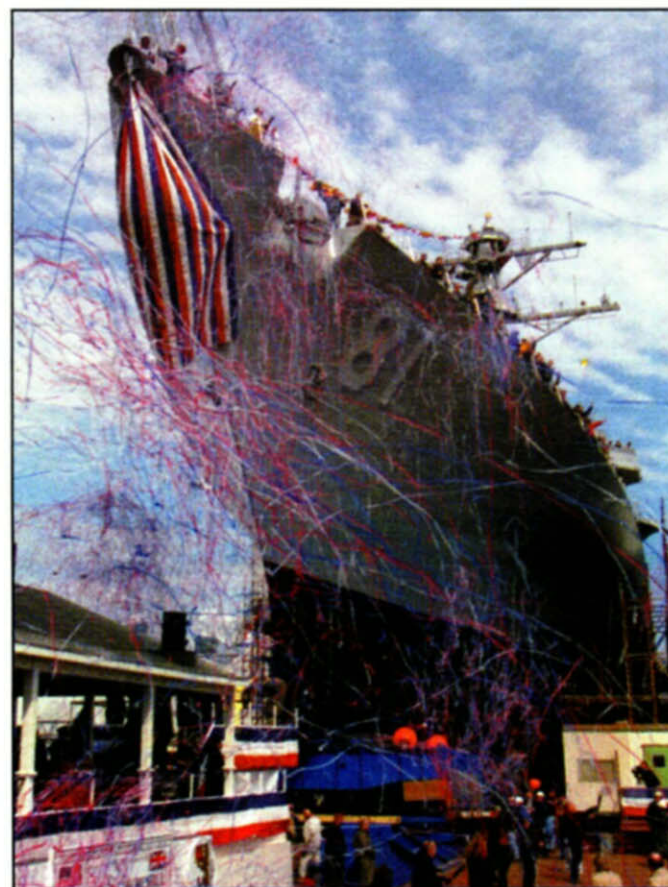
A four-stack British destroyer – received from America under Lend-Lease in the Second World War – was also named Churchill, but officially she was not named after Britain's Prime Minister but after a community name shared by Britain and the United States. She

was transferred to Soviet service in July 1944 and was sunk by a U-boat in the Arctic.

Speaking at the launch, Mr Robertson emphasised the strength of Britain's alliance with America which, he said, remained

vital to freedom and democracy.

"The crisis in Kosovo has demonstrated once again the need for nations to stand together against those who continue to deride the principles that we hold dear," he said.



● The USS Winston S. Churchill is launched amid a cloud of red, white and blue streamers. Picture: PO(PHOT) Jan Brayley

New Sandown ship launched

LATEST of the Sandown-class of minehunters, HMS Bangor, has been launched at Vosper Thornycroft's Woolston yard.

She was sent down the slipway by Mrs Lisa Spencer, wife of the Controller of the Navy, Rear Admiral Peter Spencer. Bangor is the fourth of a batch of seven ordered in 1994, and is due to enter service in 2001.

Women join Aussie subs

THE FIRST women submariners of the Royal Australian Navy were joining their boats this month. The diesel-electric vessels HMA submarines Collins and Farncomb were each receiving six women crew members.

Kick-off for UK Joint Rapid Reaction Force

THE JOINT Rapid Reaction Force, envisaged in last year's Strategic Defence Review, was formed on April 1.

The new formation builds on the Joint Rapid Deployment Force concept to provide a pool of highly capable, high-readiness units across a broad military spectrum.

It will have the necessary self-protection, tactical mobility and firepower needed for more intensive combat operations, and will be able to deploy at short notice. The JRRF will be fully formed by October 2001.

Among the changes planned is an expanded Joint Force HQ at Northwood with its own Signals

Squadron to enable it to command simultaneous operations, and an extension of the authority of the Chief of Joint Operations with appointment of a new, two-star post to assist him.

Service for Adml Pillar

A SERVICE of thanksgiving for the life and work of Admiral Sir William Pillar will be held at Bath Abbey at 3.00 on July 19. Application for tickets should be made no later than May 31 to Naval Personnel Secretariat 2B3, Room 222, Victory Building, HMNB Portsmouth, PO1 3LS.

Cattistock back after year-long repairs

WITH a 12-month repair programme complete after a serious engine room fire, HMS Cattistock has returned to her Portsmouth base.

The repairs were made by Babcock Rosyth Defence Ltd, and the minehunter has been accepted back into the Fleet following

weapon trials. Under her Commanding Officer, Lt Will Warrender, she visited Falmouth, and was returning to her duties after operational sea training. In the summer she is due to visit Liverpool for the Mersey River Festival.

Meanwhile, Fishery protection vessel HMS Orkney will decommission for sale at Portsmouth on May 27.

The oldest of a class of six vessels remaining in Royal Navy service, Orkney was commissioned 22 years ago.

A sister-ship, HMS Jersey, was taken out of service in 1993 and sold to the Bangladesh Navy where she is still in use as a training ship, the Shaheed Ruhul Amin.

Paul's formula helps subs under the ice

AN INGENIOUS mathematical formula devised by a leading hand has made it far easier and safer for submarines to navigate under the ice.

LOM(SM) Paul Batten has been awarded £150 for producing the most innovative suggestion under the Ministry of Defence's GEMS scheme.

Paul's formula now enables the depth of an ice keel to be calculated from its shadow and other data from the side-scanning system of submarines' under-ice navigation sonar – something that could not be done before.

The suggestion will be employed mainly by submarines operating under the Polar ice

cap, and it will also save considerable time in accurate mapping of the underside of the ice cap.

A spokesman for the scheme said the only reason Paul's prize was not larger was that under the rules bigger monetary prizes had to be related directly to savings.

Also among the 2,000 suggestions received under the GEMS scheme over the past year is one by Lt Cdr John Crawford RN (ret'd) for conversion in a US ship of a firing system for Mk 24 torpedoes, allowing greater flexibility in the use of trial assets.

The awards were presented at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Defence in London on April 22.

■ GEMS scheme wins praise – page 13.

New initiative over equal opportunities

A NEW Corporate Equal Opportunities Framework for the Armed Services has been introduced as the latest initiative to ensure racial and gender equality in the Forces.

Announced by Defence Secretary George Robertson, the step is designed to build on the equal opportunities work by each of the three Services. It will provide a tri-Service strategy which has a specific goal and a set of common principles.

Police open day

MINISTRY of Defence Police are holding an open day at the Victory Arena Naval sports ground in Portsmouth on July 28.



The Royal Tournament



● Favourite colours – the greens of the Fleet Air Arm, the blues of Portsmouth and the reds of Devonport sweat it out in a gruelling training schedule to reach their peak in the show-stopping Field Gun competition in the Royal Tournament.

Last chance to see historic extravaganza

THIS YEAR'S Royal Tournament will be the last. Press speculation that 1999 will see the end of an event that began almost 120 years ago has been confirmed by a Joint Service Defence Council Instruction.

The DCI, issued by the Deputy Director of Personal Services (Army), also announces that this year's grand finale for the event will not, as in previous shows, be led by one Service, but will be equally tri-Service throughout. This year would have been the Navy's turn to take the lead under the normal rota system.

The end of the Royal Tournament will also see the demise of its most enduring display – the Field Gun runs in which crews of RN ratings from Portsmouth, Devonport and Fleet Air Arm commands compete for coveted awards.

Roots of the Royal Tournament can be traced to 1880 when the Army's Grand Military Tournament and Assault at Arms opened at the Agricultural Hall, Islington. The first true display – a musical ride by the Life Guards – was introduced into the 1882 event, and two years later Queen Victoria gave permission for the Royal prefix to be added to the show's title.

The Royal Navy first took part in 1887, though it was eight more years before the event was retitled the Royal Naval and Military Tournament, moving from Islington to Olympia in the following year.

The first Field Gun run – a competitive re-enactment of the Navy's overland movement of guns in the Boer War – made its tournament

debut in 1907.

The speed with which the one-ton guns and their carriages are dismantled, manoeuvred over a testing obstacle course, reassembled and fired has thrilled audiences for most of this century.

What makes the daily feat all the more remarkable is that the three, 18-man volunteer crews – from all branches of the Service – are given less than three months to train.

After a break during World War I, the tournament reappeared in 1919 and included the newly created RAF. The following year it adopted its present title.

Again, war forced the cancellation of the annual event from 1940 until 1947 – when it was revived to increased public interest, the greater demand for tickets resulting in its relocation to the present venue at Earls Court.

This year's final show will run from July 20 to August 2, with two daily performances at 2.00-4.45 and 7.30-10.15. There will be no performances on Sunday evenings and Monday afternoons.

As well as the Field Gun Run, Naval contributions will include a dramatic Royal Marines display involving Rigid Raiders, and RN simulators among the static, interactive stands.

■ Ticket prices range from £6 to £20, with discounts for children, senior citizens and members of the Armed Forces. They can be booked through The Royal Tournament Box Office, Earls Court Exhibition Centre, Warwick Road, London SW5 9TA, tel. 0171 244 0244 for the credit card hotline, Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm.

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'Scrap-iron' carriage

THE OPENING months of the Boer War of 1899-1902 brought many disasters to the British Army.

While the Army's reputation suffered, the Navy's reputation soared. 'Jack', the nation's handyman, could do no wrong.

The Army had found it necessary to call urgently for the Navy's assistance when its guns were found to be out-classed by those of the Boers.

At the outbreak of war the most effective guns available to the Royal Field Artillery were 15-pounder BL guns. It would be several weeks before the siege train with its 5in guns and 6in howitzers could arrive.

The Boers, however, had over the years acquired 155mm Creusots (Long Toms), maximum range 11,000yds, and 75mm Krupp QF guns, maximum range 4,400yds.

The Army's 15-pounder had a maximum range of 6,000yds, thus they were heavily out-gunned.

Fortunately for the British Empire the Royal Navy's latest and most powerful armoured cruiser, HMS *Terrible* - commanded by Capt Percy Scott, the Navy's foremost gunnery expert - received a signal ordering her to proceed to South Africa where she would be joined by her sister ship, HMS *Powerful*.

On October 11, as Scott's ship was two days out of Simonstown, Boers from the Orange Free State and the Transvaal began to pour over the borders into Natal. The second Boer War had begun.

Capt Scott, concerned as ever about gunnery, learned that *Terrible's* long 12-pounders - carried for use against torpedo boats - could equal anything in use by the Army or the Boers.

Removing one of the guns from its mounting, Scott went ashore and purchased a pair of wheels and an axle-tree that normally carried a familiar Cape wagon.

On his return he set to work his armourers on the production of a field gun carriage to his design.

Twenty-four hours later the job was complet-

**By Lt Cdr Brian Witts,
Museum, HMS Excellent**

ed - "I had great difficulty in convincing the authorities that it was not a toy ... the mounting looked rather amateurish."

Nevertheless, 'amateurish' or not, another three guns were quickly prepared to the same pattern.

On October 25 Percy Scott learned that the lights of Kimberley, by now under siege by the Boers, could be seen from where the British troops were camped.

It must follow, he reasoned, that the defenders of Kimberley should be able to see a strong light directed at them from the British positions.

He immediately contacted Admiral Sir Robert Harris, Commander-in-Chief, Cape Station, with an offer to mount one of *Terrible's* searchlights on a railway truck to be sent to the front and used as a means of setting up communications with the beleaguered town.

The Admiral agreed and, almost in passing, mentioned to Scott that General Sir George White, defending the town of Ladysmith, had sent him a signal requesting "gun firing heavy projectiles at long ranges."

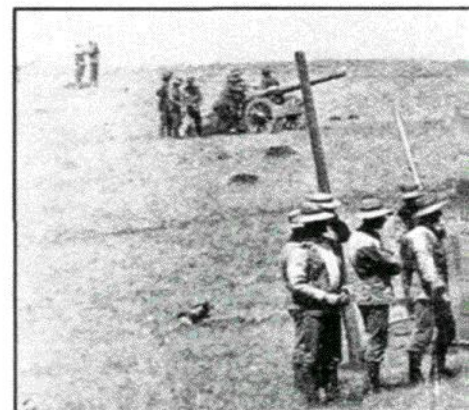
The obvious answer was the Naval 4.7in, but both the Army and the Admiral's own staff had assured him that such guns could not be mounted for shore use. Scott assured him differently.

He offered to have two 4.7in guns mounted for land use by late afternoon the following day.

Having gained the Admiral's permission to proceed, Scott returned on board and drew up his design.

He decided that the mounting should consist of four baulks of timber secured in the shape of a cross with the gun mounted in the centre.

Its simple design enabled the mounting to be broken down and reassembled with ease, thus giving the gun a degree of mobility that was to prove a great asset when they were used.



At 5 o'clock on the following day HMS *Powerful* set sail for Durban carrying *Terrible's* four 12-pounders on their wagon wheels and two 4.7in guns mounted for use ashore.

Upon their arrival *Powerful's* Naval Brigade, under the command of their Captain, the Honourable Hedworth Lambton, set out for Ladysmith.

The railway was used for most of the journey, but where the track could not go oxen were used to haul the guns - and where the oxen failed the sailors themselves dragged the guns into dongas, up kopjes, and over streams.

They arrived in Ladysmith "in the nick of time". Forty-eight hours later the Boers encircled the town and the 119-day siege had begun.

Almost as soon as they arrived the Naval guns were in action against the 6in Long Toms which the Boers had positioned on Popworth Hill.

The enemy was forced to withdraw, but not before an early tragedy had struck the Naval Brigade.

Lt Egerton RN, the *Powerful's* gunnery officer, lay dying, his legs shattered by a Boer shell - "This will put a stop to my cricket, I'm afraid."

As the siege progressed HMS *Terrible* was ordered to Durban where Capt Scott was to



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● By land and sea – a Naval Brigade 4.7in gun from HMS Terrible shelling Boer lines.



assume the duties of Military Commandant.

In addition to being responsible for the defence of the town, he also applied his mind to preparing more guns for use against the enemy and, in particular, for use in relieving Ladysmith.

Before he had left Simonstown he had visited the dockyard blacksmith's shop where he had drawn a design on the floor in chalk of a mobile carriage for 4.7in guns.

Although he could only use the materials that were immediately at hand, the gun-carriage was a great success (the sailors nick-named it the "scrap-iron carriage.")

At Durban more carriages were built and 4.7in guns mounted. By the end of the campaign a total of 41 guns were mounted on Scott's designs – including one on a railway truck and test-fired by Lady Randolph Churchill.

To keep his sailors fit Scott sent them on forced marches, taking their guns with them.

Of one such march Scott records: "I wired to Cdr Limpus – 'Take a 4.7in gun without oxen to Umgeni (6.5 miles), fire a round, report time of leaving and time of return.'"

"In five minutes I got a reply – 'Have left' – and four hours later I rode out to meet them returning.

"They were almost back at their camp, and coming up a hill. I have never seen a finer sight.

"The 100 men were marching magnificently, pulling for all they were worth. Everything they had on was sweated through.

"When they saw me they broke into double time, and Cdr Limpus, watch in hand, said: 'We shall do it in four and a half hours,' and they did."

Eventually two 4.7in guns and 16 12-pounders complete with their crews were taken by General Buller on his way to relieve Ladysmith.

On December 15 the guns were used to great effect during the Battle of Colenso where "they succeeded in silencing every one of the enemy's guns they could locate", and January 16, 1900, saw them in action at Spion Kop.

In February General Buller asked Scott for a 6in gun to be mounted on a carriage – "I want it Monday," Scott replied "6in gun on mobile mounting will leave here on Sunday night."

The gun required 200 men to haul it to the beach for test firing, and to drag it to the railway.

Within days it was firing from a range of 16,000yds at Boer positions at Colenso.

It had been given the nickname Roma after Percy Scott's wife.

The great day came on March 3, 1900.

Terrible's gun crews marched into Ladysmith to relieve their colleagues from Powerful.

A grateful nation went wild with joy at the news, and the parts played by the Royal Navy's guns earned a permanent and glittering role in the Empire's story.

The great Queen herself telegraphed: "Pray express my deep appreciation to the Naval Brigade for the valuable services they have rendered with their guns."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote ecstatically of "...the long, thin 4.7s and the hearty bearded men who worked them."

The *Navy and Army Illustrated* trumpeted "None but sailors could handle such ponderous toys with such ease and freedom", and the citizens of Simonstown told Capt Hedworth Lambton and his crew that they wished "to record our admiration of the very conspicuous part you have performed in so gallantly and worthily upholding the best traditions of the British Navy and in maintaining the supremacy of our Queen and Empire."

Rudyard Kipling dipped his pen to write that the sailors had "trundled their way to heaven to the tune of the four point seven."

Some weeks after the relief of Ladysmith the two great ships sailed.

HMS Terrible continued on her way to China where where the four 12-pounders originally mounted by Capt Scott took part in the raising of yet another siege – this time Peking.

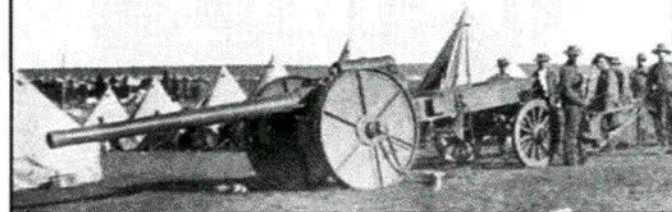
HMS Powerful returned home to a rapturous welcome. The ship's company paraded through London and marched through packed, flag-waving, cheering crowds.

As they passed the Royal Exchange "sober-sided men of business lost their self-control and hurled their hats into the air after the manner of schoolboys."

But the greatest accolade was yet to come.

As the sailors were inspected on Horse Guards Parade by the Prince of Wales the great man reached forward and shook the hand of one of the gun crew, "an honour in all probability never been paid to any Naval gunner before."

● Gun crew – one of HMS Powerful's 4.7in guns as the crew prepare to inspan the oxen.



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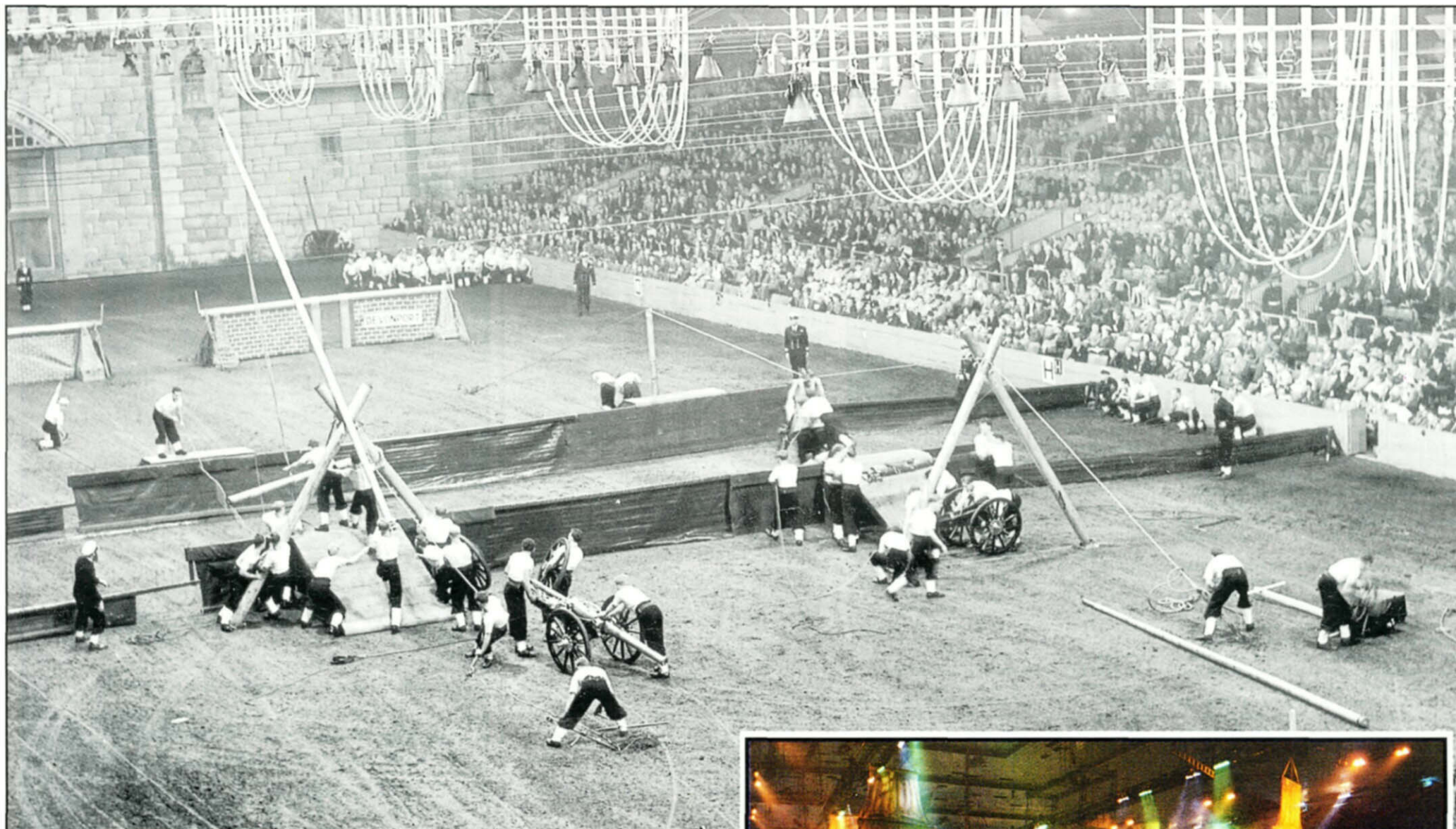
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